Daily Report

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ECO Foreign Ministers Conference Wraps Up

End to Afghan Trouble Sought

NC2701152894 Paris AFP in English 1339 GMT 27 Jan 94

[Text] Tehran, Jan 27 (AFP)—Foreign ministers of the 10-member Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO), winding up a meeting in Tehran on Thursday [27 January] search for ways of ending the civil war in Afghanistan which they consider a threat to the region.

The ECO was founded in 1985 by Iran, Turkey and Pakistan and was expanded in 1991 to include Afghanistan as well as the former Soviet republics of Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

On the sidelines of the two-day meeting, organised to discuss economic cooperation, the ministers of 10 Muslim countries in the region put forward several "practical proposals" to help end the conflict, Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati said.

Speaking to reporters, Velayati acknowledged the difficult task of restoring peace to Afghanistan, but added that Iran and other countries in the region "were determined to continue their search." He declined to explain what the "practical proposals" were.

Several participants in the meeting revealed that "a certain number of ideas" have been put foreward by the ministers, among which is establishment of a regional conference under the auspices of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC), which comprises 50 Muslim countries.

The OIC's Secretary General Hamid al-Qabid, who took part in the seminar, said an OIC delegation was currently in the Afghan capital to try and secure a ceasefire.

He said that he would himself go to Kabul if asked to start mediation among rival Afghan forces.

Qabid told AFP that the accord reached between the factions in Islamabad last spring, at the prodding of Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, was no longer effective but could be used as "a basis for future discussions".

Afghan Foreign Minister Hedayat Amin Arsala told AFP that he favored a comprehensive solution searched for by the United Nations or OIC rather than mediation efforts undertaken by Afghanistan's neighbors, whose "objectives are not clear so far."

"After all, finding a solution is primarily the responsibility of Afghans themselves," he said.

The ministers also addressed other regional crises, namely the civil war in Tajikistan between the pro-communist government and the Islamic opposition, as well as the Armenian-Azeri conflict.

Azerbaijan did not appear to have gathered the solid support it expected in a bid to impose widespread economic sanctions against Armenia, according to participants.

The Tajik minister, for his part, categorically rejected mediation offers by several ECO members, saying his country prefered wider efforts undertaken by the United Nations.

On the economic front, the countries agreed to cooperate on setting up a regional trade and development bank, establishing insurance links and creating a joint airline and shipping company.

Cooperation in transportation and communication were also given priority during the conference, as many of the ECO member states are land-locked and need access to the sea and outside world, Velayati said.

The ministers also discussed cooperation between the ECO and several international organisations. Memorandums of understanding were signed Tuesday between the ECO and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) as well as United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO).

Iran Leader on West's 'Illegal Interests'

LD2701155894 Almaty KAZTAG in Russian 1430 GMT 27 Jan 94

[Text] [no dateline as received] Iranian President Hashemi-Rafsanjani appealed to the former Soviet republics of Central Asia to keep their distance from the West and "make their own decisions about their plight" at a meeting of the foreign ministers of the ECO [Economic Cooperation Organization] member-countries, which took place at the Iranian capital. This regional organization originally included Iran, Turkey, and Pakistan, but in 1992 Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan joined it.

According to the president, the United States and Europe are not interested in the settlement of conflicts that are taking place in the young states of the region and might even foment them. He said: "Unfortunately, the colonial powers do not pay attention to those ruinous conflicts in the 'Third World' that do not involve their interests. In some cases they even fan the flames of these conflicts in order to reach their diabolic objectives and ensure their illegal interests."

Hashemi-Rafsanjani indicated the urgent necessity of close cooperation of the ECO member-countries that are rich in natural and labor resources. "It is absolutely evident that this cooperation will reduce our economic dependence on the developed countries" and will decrease the political tension in the region, the president stressed.

Amman To Host International Economic Conference

JN2701172794 Dubayy AL-BAYAN in Arabic 26 Jan 94 p 1

[Text] Amman—AL-BAYAN—During his recent tour of the region, the U.S. secretary of commerce discussed the possibility of holding an international economic conference in Amman to draw an international "Marshall" plan to develop the Middle East region in the future peace stage. Well-informed sources told AL-BAYAN's correspondent in Amman that this conference, scheduled to be held in June, will be attended by British Prime Minister John Major, German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, French President Francois Mitterrand, and senior government officials from the United States, Japan, Canada, and some European countries. U.S. Vice President Al Gore may attend the conference.

More than 4,000 international companies and corporations are also expected to participate, in addition to representatives from Israel and some Arab countries, in order to prepare comprhensive plans to develop the entire Middle East region. The conference will be a continuation of the donor states conference organized by Washington after the signing of the Oslo accord.

Arab-Israeli Talks

Rabinovich on Security Principles, Demilitarization

TA2701191194 Jerusalem New Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 27 Jan 94

[Video report by Washington correspondent 'Imanu'el Rosen]

[Excerpt] [passage omitted] At the Washington talks, the major development so far has been the positive atmosphere and the initial, albeit hesitant, discussion of substantive issues. Thus, for example, Itamar Rabinovich and Muwaffaq al-'Allaf briefly touched on the issue of principles of security on the Golan Heights. Rabinovich suggested that the two men discuss the issue as though an Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights had already been decided upon. The Syrian negotiator did not rule out the proposal but has so far refused to hold an open and detailed debate on the issue.

Meanwhile, the talks on the Syrian, Lebanese, and Palestinian tracks are being conducted between the heads of the delegations. It remains unclear whether the expanded delegations will meet next week.

In the meantime, not only King Husayn but also Shaykh Hamad Bin-Jasim, the Qatari foreign minister, took some brave steps toward reconciliation with Israel. He admitted tonight that Qatar was holding trade negotiations with Israel on a large gas deal; however, the foreign minister clearly explained to us this evening that a signed agreement was still a long way off.

[Begin Bin-Jasim recording, in English] When we see some advance in the negotiations with Syria and Lebanon, we will take our own action with the second and the third boycott. And about the first boycott, it will have to be taken through the Arab league. [end recording]

The minister promised that the Israelis arriving in Qatar for the multilateral talks in April would receive a warm welcome.

[Begin Bin-Jasim recording, in English] And I think our people will accept our move and they will even defend the case by themselves. [end recording]

The heads of the Syrian and Israeli delegations have also agreed about the definition of the proposed demilitarization of the Golan Heights. This will be a balanced demilitarization that will not obligate Israel to demilitarize large areas of the Galilee in exchange for the demilitarization of the Golan Heights.

PLO-Israeli Negotiations Continue in Cairo

Palestinian Sources on Differences

NC2701124494 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1127 GMT 27 Jan 94

[Text] Cairo, 27 Jan (MENA)—Palestinian and Israeli negotiators held a fourth round of talks at 1100 today to resolve the differences between them. The differences continue to stall the implementation of the autonomy agreement in Gaza and Jericho.

The Palestinian delegation to the talks, headed by Ahmad Quray', alias Abu-'Ala', the head of the PLO's Economic Department, comprises Dr. Nabil Sha'th, Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat's political adviser, and Palestinian Ambassador in Cairo Sa'id Kamal.

The Israeli delegation is headed by Uri Savir, director general of the Israeli Foreign Ministry, and comprises Uzi Dayan, political planning director at the Ministry, and Yo'el Singer, legal adviser at the Foreign Ministry.

The two delegations have held four sessions since the Israeli delegation arrived in Cairo. One session took place at Palestinian president Yasir 'Arafat's residence in the al-Andalus Palace in Heliopolis.

Sources from the Palestinian delegation told MENA that the basic points of difference still revolve around the issue of security control over the crossings into Jordan from Jericho and into Egyptian Rafah from the Gaza Strip. Israel rejects a noticeable Palestinian security presence on the King Husayn Bridge—the Allenby Bridge—crossing into Jordan.

The same sources said that Israel is demanding its own security presence to observe people traveling to the autonomy region even if Palestinian-Israeli agreement is reached on an Israeli security presence in which Israeli security men are hidden behind a screen and won't be obvious.

The same sources noted that the negotiations to have the Israelis accept the symbols of Palestinian sovereignty over the autonomy areas have finally culminated in Israel accepting the Palestinian flag being hoisted over the special crossing for travelers to and from the autonomy region.

As for the Jericho region, the same sources clarified that Israel still refuses to hand over power to a Palestinian autonomy to administratively control the areas of Jabal al-Qarantal and al-Maghtis on the River Jordan. It only allows religious control during religious celebrations. Israel also refuses to place the area of Maqam al-Nabi Musa, which falls on the main Jerusalem road, under Palestinian control.

The current Palestinian-Israeli round of talks is expected to end at around 1400 today and resume its meetings later in the afternoon.

The same Palestinian sources also said in a statement today that the points they will reach agreement on during this round of talks, which is considered an attempt to support the negotiations and propel them forward, will be presented to president 'Arafat and Israeli Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres during their meeting on Saturday evening in Davos, Switzerland, on the sidelines of the international economic forum that starts its meetings there today.

Formula on Differences Detailed

NC2701190594 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1735 GMT 27 Jan 94

[Text] Cairo, 27 Jan (MENA)—Palestinian Ambassador in Cairo Sa'id Kamal has said that during their meeting this morning Palestinian and Israeli negotiators for the first time reached a formula listing points of difference and points of agreement in the disputed issues of border crossings and the size of the Israeli withdrawal from Jericho.

He said the negotiations, which continued over six long sessions, identified 12 points of difference. These are now being worded to be presented to Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat and Israeli Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres before their upcoming meeting in the Swiss city of Davos Saturday [29 January] night and Sunday on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum.

If 'Arafat and Peres reach an agreement on those points, Kamal added, a committee will meet in Taba next week to work out the final wording of a protocol on the implementation of the Gaza-Jericho agreement, to be signed by 'Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin, so that there will be a complete Israeli withdrawal before 13 April in accordance with the Palestinian-Israeli Declaration of Principles.

MENA has learned that the formula includes an agreement to raise the Palestinian flag outside the administration building that will control the border crossings. Other points are: No Palestinian security man in military uniform shall be seen on the same crossing leading to King Husayn (Allenby) Bridge. The Israeli security man watching arrivals in the Palestinian autonomous region of Gaza and Jericho shall stay inside the building behind a dark glass barrier.

The Israelis agreed that the arrivals be inspected electronically. In case of suspicion, however, anyone can be inspected by Palestinian security men while the Israelis watch.

Some differences remain. The Palestinians want Israel to give the self-rule authority administrative as well as religious supervision over the areas of Jabal al-Qarantal and al-Maghtis on the River Jordan and Maqam al-Nabi Musa on the main road to Jerusalem.

The Israeli delegation will leave Cairo later today immediately after the working session, which is scheduled to last until evening.

Sha'th: No Delay Acceptable

NC2801102494 Paris AFP in English 0946 GMT 28 Jan 94

[Text] Cairo, Jan 28 (AFP)—Israel and the PLO failed to make sufficient progress toward launching Palestinian self-rule at negotiations here this week, PLO chief negotiator Nabil Sha'th said Friday [28 January] on the eve of crucial talks in Switzerland.

"Some progress was certainly made during 36 hours of negotiations, but it was insufficient," Sha'th told AFP.

PLO leader Yasir 'Arafat and Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres are due to meet in Davos, Switzerland, on Saturday in a new effort to break the deadlock. They will examine 12 points of disagreement drawn up by the negotiators.

Stressing the Palestine Liberation Organisation's "attachment" to the autonomy accord signed in Washington on September 13, Sha'th said the PLO "insists that the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and Jericho ends on the date set by the accord"—April 13.

"We will not accept any delay," Sha'th added.

Israeli troops were to have begun withdrawing on December 13.

Sha'th said he would attend the Davos talks with PLO economic department chief Ahmad Quray' (Abu-al-'Ala').

The two sides are trying to resolve differences over control of border crossings and the size of the future autonomous Jericho area in the West Bank.

The PLO representative in Cairo, Sa'id Kamal, said that if 'Arafat and Peres ironed out the differences in Davos, negotiators would meet in Egypt's Red Sea resort of Taba to prepare the text of an agreement.

'Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin would then sign the agreement, he added.

However in Jerusalem, Peres said Israel and the PLO still had much work to do before launching Palestinian self-rule.

"Although I am generally an optimist I cannot promise that an accord will be reached in Davos," Peres said before leaving.

Inter-Arab Affairs

PLO Urged To Stay 'Neutral' in Regional Disputes

PM2701145094 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 26 Jan 94 p11

['Abd-al-Rahman al-Rashid article: "'Arafat and the Lesson of the Gulf"]

[Text] There was a distinct air of anticipation as Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat met with Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz in Riyadh. As everyone knows, the significance of that meeting stems from the fact that it was the first meeting after the three-year official boycott between the two sides as a result of the position taken by the PLO in support and in defense of the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait.

As the announcement is made of the closure of the dispute file, it is wise to talk about ways of maintaining special relations which could deteriorate if not kept at the right temperature.

The golden advice given to the PLO at the beginning of the crisis after Iraq occupied an entire country and displaced its people in a serious precedent, still stands. It is that the PLO should adopt one of two lines: Adhere to the Arab League's bylaws which condemn such acts, or take a neutral stand and choose isolation that would spare it embarrassment.

One could understand the Sudanese president standing up and insulting an afflicted fraternal state at the summit conference held in Cairo after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, for the Sudanese Government was then and is now a military government whose hands were smeared in blood of the coup which toppled a civilian government not long before that. At that conference, the Sudanese president deliberately ignored the legitimate call by Kuwait and nine other Arab states for the condemnation of the occupation in principle and for an end to that occupation, and instead called for the formation of a committee to study the matter and to visit Baghdad (?), finding the condemnation call too much. One could understand this, coming from a man whose action in his own country was equal to the Iraqi president's crime, but 'Arafat committed an even worse act when he raised his hand in support of the Sudanese request, to the amazement of the majority. But in 'Arafat's case, his [Palestinian] territory is occupied and his people displaced. Before anyone else, he should have immediately condemned the occupation instead of supporting the call for the formation of a committee to study the matter. No Arab had called for the formation of a committee before Israel was condemned.

This is not the day of reckoning but the PLO might find itself in similar difficult political situations in the future, whether after it has its own state on its own territory or while still an airborne government, as the Libyan leader calls it. If the PLO has complex interests it fears for, the least it can do in such a case is to take a neutral stand, the best known diplomatic invention in politics.

The PLO lost its honor, its resources, and many friends in that crisis and the situation reached a dangerous point for the Palestinian cause because of the PLO's impartiality. Now it is urged to stay out of the whirlpool of regional alliances because it is the only party whose cause everyone has agreed to support.

Palestinian Affairs

Fatah Assails 'Recent Israeli Practices' in Gaza

TA2701182394 Jerusalem AL-NAHAR in Arabic 27 Jan 94 pp 3, 7

[Text] Gaza—Last night Fatah issued a press release on recent Israeli practices in the Gaza Strip. In its statement, Fatah stressed that it views with gravity recent Israeli practices in the occupied territories, the culmination of which was the recent campaign of detentions in the Gaza Strip.

The statement referred to opening fire on residents in Jabalyah last Saturday [22 January], the demolition of houses in Rafah, the detentions that have covered most areas of the Gaza Strip, and the campaign of confiscating magnetic identity cards from hundreds of workers without any justification.

The statement emphasized that the Israeli side is incapable of proving its credibility and seriousness with respect to the current peace process. In its statement, Fatah called on the Israeli authorities to immediately release all prisoners, especially the sick, the elderly, and those who have spent long periods in detention, without discriminating against one people. The statement also called on the authorities to release fugitives who were detained after the signing of the Declaration of Principles and to return recently revoked identity cards to hundreds of workers.

In conclusion, Fatah stated that the Israeli side should immediately stop these practices, which will have a negative effect on the negotiating process.

'Abd-al-Shafi to PLO: Set Up National Council

TA2801175694 Jerusalem AL-QUDS in Arabic 26 Jan 94 p 4

[Excerpt] Amman, QUDS PRESS—Dr. Haydar 'Abd-al-Shafi, former head of the Palestinian delegation to the bilateral peace talks, has called on the Palestinian leadership to form a national authority council in the Gaza Strip and another one in the West Bank. In a memorandum submitted to the PLO Executive Committee, 'Abd-al-Shafi said that in light of the evolving situation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, particularly after the signing of the Palestinian-Israeli Declaration of Principles accord, the requirements of the transfer of power, and other matters related to the implementation of the accord, we see a need to set up a national authority council in the Gaza Strip and another one in the West Bank. This council should consist of respected local nationalist personalities who enjoy national credibility and high moral standards and who represent various sectors of the social and political fabric.

Dr. 'Abd-al-Shafi, who recently led the reformers' delegation to Tunis, defined the authority's tasks as follows:

It will be the only national and local authority and the local address of the PLO.

It will be the only channel of contact with the PLO.

It will serve as an advisory body to the Palestinian leadership on all local matters, above all by giving its opinion regarding the transfer of powers and other matters stemming from the Declaration of Principles and its implementation.

It will carry out all other tasks in its capacity as a national and local authority council.

It will coordinate among the various bodies should this be necessary.

The memorandum submitted by 'Abd-al-Shafi suggested that this authority continue in its tasks until elections are held. It also proposed that the PLO Executive Committee form a small preparatory committee, comprised of personalities from inside, to set up this authority.

Dr. Taysir 'Aruri, member of the Palestinian People's Party political bureau, has said that 'Abd-al-Shafi's demand enjoys his party's support and that of FIDA [Palestinian Democratic Union], Fatah's partners in the Palestinian leadership. He pointed out that Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh, member of the PLO Executive Committee and FIDA's leader, supported this idea during the Palestinian leadership's meetings, but the proposal was rejected by Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat. [passage omitted]

DFLP Urges Formation of National Leadership

PM2801105494 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 27 Jan 94 p 2

[Unattributed report: "Democratic Front Urges Speeding up Formation of Islamic National Leadership of Intifadah"]

[Text] Damascus, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT—The Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine [DFLP] led by Nayif Hawatimah has called for the holding of popular conferences and the formation of the Islamic National Leadership of the intifadah in implementation of the decisions taken at the first meeting of the Palestinian Forces Alliance, held in Damascus 10 January.

An authoritative DFLP source has said that the central leadership of the alliance decided to begin immediately to hold popular conferences inside [the occupied territories] and in the diaspora as an important step toward stripping the bureaucratic PLO leadership of legitimacy and in preparation for holding the general people's national conference, which will elect a new political leadership for the Palestinian leadership and rebuild PLO institutions on democratic foundations.

The source believes that beginning to implement this decision will be considered a practical measure of the extent of the alliance's seriousness in its new form.

The source also pointed out that the central leadership of the alliance had stressed the decision to form the Islamic National Leadership of the Intifadah in the occupied Palestinian territories—which requires that all parties concerned hasten to implement it immediately. This is in the knowledge that the present leadership of the intifadah is formed from the DFLP and the Popular Front [for the Liberation of Palestine], as the forces involved in the Oslo-Washington agreement have abandoned it.

On the central leadership's other decisions concerning organizational and administrative aspects, the source said that these decisions become valuable when they help to effect the alliance's political role, specifically in two main spheres: holding popular conferences and expanding the intifadah leadership so as to include the other parties of the alliance operating in the occupied homeland which are still outside this unionist framework.

Al-Hariri Remarks on Palestinian Issue Deplored

PM2801100094 London AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI in Arabic 27 Jan 94 p 11

[Editorial: "Slip of Tongue From al-Hariri?"]

[Text] Rafiq al-Hariri's success in making billions [currency not specified] from his private businesses in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and using these billions as a passport to reach premiership in Lebanon does not mean that he is a successful politician. Because politics is a

science that has its own rules and basic elements. Of course, money is one of the elements, but not the only one.

Al-Hariri arrived in London and was very warmly received by some Lebanese and Palestinians. he held press conferences and delivered lectures in his capacity as a rich man first and a prime minister second. He was successful in most of them. But success failed him in one of them, specifically at the press conference held at the foreign correspondents association.

In this conference al-Hariri focused on his country's refusal to settle Palestinians in Lebanon. He stressed this point at great length, as though the Palestinians are just refugees, not Arabs also. Maybe they are not human. Al-Hariri tends to forget that he is from Sidon (unless he still insists that he is from al-Dar'iyah [as transliterated]), which is a few kilometers from Palestinian 'Akko.

It might be useful to recall that the people of Sidon, Tyre, and southern Lebanon have always been an extension of the people of Galilee and the Palestinian coast, and vice versa, to the extent that it is difficult to distinguish between them in terms of features, customs, and traditions.

But al-Hariri, who holds Saudi nationality, although he is Lebanese, and is enjoying all its privileges, is using a non-pan-Arab—we would not say racist—language when dealing with Palestinians. Because he thinks that their might has been destroyed and that he can through foreign aid flex his muscles on them whenever he wants.

We assure al-Hariri that the Palestinians are guests of the Lebanese, just as they are guests of the Syrians, Jordanians, and all the other Arabs. They appreciate the patience and generosity of their hosts. And they have not asked to be settled, because nothing can replace their homeland, otherwise they would not have become strugglers and fighters.

The point which attracted our attention most in his press conference was when he said he would consider an application to be submitted by Palestinian President 'Arafat to visit Lebanon, hence indicating that the Palestinian president needs a visa from the nearest Lebanese consul to make the visit in question, while other Palestinian leaders do not get the same treatment when they enter Lebanon.

Regrettably, these unsuccessful statements, which lack the simplest political and diplomatic rules, came in reply to an optimistic question suggesting that the problem of President 'Arafat's visit to Lebanon was resolved the moment he was received in Riyadh by the Saudi monarch, King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz. But al-Hariri—because of lack of experience or information—"maybe" did not understand the significance. He failed to seize the opportunity to improve his government's position toward an Arab leader who only did what al-Hariri wants to do but cannot, that is sign a peace agreement with Israel.

It saddens us—and we know the situation in Lebanon and the independence of al-Hariri's government—to hear these unsuccessful statements, which do not reflect a realistic and correct political reading of the rapid developments in the Arab region, the most recent of which is the Palestinian president's visit to Damascus and Riyadh and the historic meeting held in Geneva less than two weeks ago between Presidents Hafiz al-Asad and Bill Clinton.

Prime Minister al-Hariri needs a pause for examination and a thorough revision of his positions, especially on the Palestinian issue and people—a pause that matches the depth of the relationship between the Lebanese and Palestinian peoples, which was built on joint sacrifices for the sake of bolstering the issues of Arabism, first and foremost the Lebanese and Palestinian issues.

Algeria

Dembri Lauds Moroccan King's View on Future

LD2701164594 Rabat MAP in English 1336 GMT 27 Jan 94

[Text] Algiers, Jan 27 (MAP)—The king of Morocco is a man of good political sense, who has a future view of the future [as received] on all the problems of the region, Algerian Foreign Minister Mohamed Salah Dembri said.

"We all agree on this vision of the Maghreban integration and on the need to put all our potential to develop and organize our region within a Euro-Maghreban partnership", Dembri said in a statement to the Moroccan news agency "MAP" on the fringes of the Algerian consensus conference, explaining that this an immense working program.

Customs Officer, Four Smugglers Killed in Ambush

LD2601162594 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1500 GMT 26 Jan 94

[Text] A statement by the General Customs Department said that a group of about 14 smugglers of basic commodities yesterday set an ambush for a customs officers' patrol in Timelaouine, close to the Algerian-Malian border, which led to the killing of a customs officer. The statement pointed out that the five-member customs officers' patrol responded to the attack and succeeded in killing four members of the smuggling gang and wounding two others.

Egypt

Mubarak Comments on Terrorism, Other Issues

NC2701195394 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1715 GMT 27 Jan 94

[Excerpts] Cairo, 27 Jan (MENA)—Information Minister Safwat al-Sharif has stated that President Husni Mubarak discussed a number of issues, including terrorism, corruption, freedom of opinion, the housing law, and the national dialogue issue during his meeting today with writers, thinkers, and intellectuals.

President Mubarak also listened to a large number of intellectuals, thinkers, and opinion makers about their concepts of these problems and issues, both at the internal and external policy levels. They also discussed the cultural challenge under peace, the national dialogue, and the various problems facing books and the theater. The president emphasized a number of issues and principles during this dialogue.

President Mubarak also stressed his pledge to respect the law and Constitution without resorting to any emergency measure in the confrontation with terrorism, even though that means that it might take longer to eliminate terrorism.

The information minister added that President Mubarak also stressed that corruption is not being covered up, saying that every such case is referred to the courts for investigation. He said that not a single case of corruption is covered up by the state; on the contrary, the government has always taken the initiative in following up and exposing such cases and referring them to the judiciary.

The president stressed that every person who indulges in corruption is brought to account and tried so that others will be deterred. He said: We should respect the values of publication and not belittle or insult ourselves.

The information minister went on to say that, on the issue of freedom of opinion, President Mubarak stressed that there is no confiscation of an opinion, idea, or book. He said: We will not permit the confiscation or the recollection from markets of a book because of an administrative decision made by an establishment or government department.

The president also stressed that the housing law will not be referred to the People's Assembly until after an exhaustive discussion and debate, adding that there will be no law that harms the sons of society. He said: Up to this minute, no draft law has been prepared. All we have are studies and views on this subject.

The president called for setting up a higher specialized committee that includes experts in civil planning and housing to draw up the plan for tackling the issue of slums all over the republic.

On the issue of the national dialogue, which he has called for, the president stressed that the dialogue's objective is Egypt's present and future, adding that it will include all the political parties, national forums, intellectuals, thinkers, experts, and specialists.

President Mubarak added: This dialogue will have working papers that will be prepared before it starts. He proposed that the dialogue start on 1 April.

The information minister said that the president emphasized his responsibility to protect the security of Egypt and its sons and to achieve stability on its land, noting that there is a red line that no human being or group is allowed to cross.

President Mubarak stressed that the achievement of a just peace in the region will lead to the development of a better life and to a rise in its sons' standard of living. He said that this can come only through the use of advanced technology and cooperation and coordination between the countries of the region.

President Mubarak affirmed that the emergency law will continue and that, with the ongoing acts of terrorism, drug trafficking, and unusual circumstances, it is impossible to change or abolish it. He noted that this law was passed to safeguard society and that it will not affect freedom of speech and of the press.

President Mubarak called on the government to reconsider certain laws to close loopholes regarding the illegal buildings and to deter violators. He stressed that buildings that have technically and structurally safe foundations will not be demolished. He requested that fines imposed on floors built in violation of the law be transferred to the popular housing fund. He said that expropriation of property should be partial and in accordance with a legal decision and verdict in favor of popular housing.

Al-Sharif noted that President Mubarak stressed that with peace Egypt is capable of dealing with the region with self-confidence to achieve progress and increase and improve production.

President Mubarak stated that he referred to the People's Assembly a bill requesting abrogation of the agreement of the Arab Cooperation Council [which includes Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, and Yemen]. President Mubarak ordered the formation of a tripartite committee of the ministers of information, culture, and education to meet monthly to coordinate efforts to educate and enlighten society. He requested that the government study the problem of books and their prices to ensure export and competition in foreign markets. He requested reducing customs fees on paper so that Egypt will retain its vanguard cultural standing.

Al-Sharif said that President Mubarak declared that Egypt will not sign the agreement banning the use of chemical weapons unless it is linked to banning the use of nuclear weapons. President Mubarak said that Egypt's stance is firm on this issue and it will not sign this agreement unless the other is signed.

President Mubarak stressed that national dialogue will involve all legal parties and national forces. He emphasized respect for the law and that there will be no dialogue with illegal groups. He said that the Constitution in Egypt bans the establishment of religious parties and that the experiments of Jordan and Algeria will not be repeated in Egypt. No one will impose a view on Egypt or its people in the name of religion.

At the beginning of the meeting, President Mubarak broached the issue of terrorism, stressing that it preoccupies every Egyptian citizen despite the fact that it is an international phenomenon. He noted that we see acts of violence taking place everyday worldwide. He said that despite this we will not be lenient in confronting terrorism and stopping bloodshed and its impact on stability and the people's wellbeing. He noted that terrorism can be ended in a short time but will require exceptional measures. He stressed that in its firm confrontation of terrorism, Egypt wants to entrench the supremacy of law and respect for the Constitution, although settling this phenomenon once and for all will take time. He said that we are determined to ensure respect for the law and the Constitution without taking any exceptional measures to confront terrorism.

President Mubarak said that certain people speak of human rights and defend the rights of those who commit crimes of terrorism, forgetting the rights of victims and the state's right to protect and ensure security for its people. He noted that there are forces and states seeking to harm Egypt's stability and that certain parties fund the fugitive criminals. These parties finance terrorists to commit their crimes thinking that they will escape law and justice. [passage omitted]

Dr. Muhammad 'Abdallah and Sakinah Fu'ad spoke at the meeting on Arab-Israeli cooperation and the importance for President Mubarak of having a cultural adviser. President Mubarak said that cooperation among the Arab countries of the region and Israel under peace is clear to Egypt, noting his country's initiative to achieve progress. He stressed that there is a need to give and to take to serve the region's people. He said: I do not agree that I should have a cultural adviser because the channel between myself and the intellectuals is always open. He said: I do not agree with the confiscation of books because the law regulates this issue.

Journalist Salah Hafiz spoke on cooperation between Egypt and Israel in the next stage. President Mubarak said that under peace we have to deal with all countries of the region with self- confidence because no one can control our will or beliefs or take from us what we do not want to give. He said: When I call for openness, I call for cooperation, coordination, and openness under peace to bring about progress and increase and improve production. [passage omitted]

Policemen Killed in Attack on Asyut Security Official

NC2701220894 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2215 GMT 27 Jan 94

[Text] Asyut, 27 Jan (MENA)—Two police officers escorting Colonel Jamal Zaki Matta, commander of the Asyut Security Service Vehicles Department, were killed tonight when unknown assailants fired at the colonel's vehicle as he was heading to work in Asyut.

Col. Matta was not hurt in the attack. His driver was slightly injured. Police have cordoned off the scene of the attack and are conducting a search for the perpetrators. The Prosecution Office has started investigating the case.

Libya

Al-Fazzani on Work of General Peoples Congress

LD2701210594 Tripoli JANA in English 1450 GMT 27 Jan 94

[Excerpt] Surt, Ay Annar [January] JAMAHIRIYAH NEWS AGENCY—Jum'ah al-Fazzani, the secretary of the General Peoples Committee for Unity said that the decrees issued by the basic peoples congresses emphasize

the importance of continuing action to achieve Arab unity based on the points set out in the declaration of the authority of the people.

In his response to the matter of the basic peoples congresses yesterday, to the General Peoples Congress, the secretary for unity said that it was highly honourable for our great Arab people to ask its executive administration about the process of achieving Arab unity. This serves to increase awareness, a sense of responsiblity and revolutionary spirit among the people, foremost among whom is the leader of the great al-fatih revolution, the safekeeper of Arab nationalism and Arab unity after his strategic goal crystallised. This awareness entailed realisation of the strategic goals which threaten the existence of the Arab nation and the resulting state of division it is in. This reaffirms the full responsiblity to struggle to achieve Arab unity. This was entrenched in the declaration of the authority of the people. He reiterated his emphasis on the unity aspiring will which is continuing for the sake of struggle and to achieve Arab unity from the Gulf to the Sea.

The secretary [word indistinct] that the matter proves the determination of the Libyan Arab people to follow up their executive bodies and to take them into account for any shortfallings in achieving Arab unity as a strategic option. The matter also shows our peoples determination, at the forefront who is Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi, the leader of the great al fateh revolution, to pave the way for future Arab generations and become a model of revolutionary struggle.

This shortcoming in achieving Arab unity was resolved in [words indistinct] fraternal bureau in Khartoum by replacing the [words indistinct] employees there with suitable inxivixuals and then a suitable candidate was chosen for secretary [words indistinct]. The bureau then issued a publication to all Libyans in the Sudan on a visit or on business, particularly those in Khartoum and Dunqulah, to contact the bureau if they needed help in any matter.

In a short space of time, the secretariat of the General Peoples Committee for Unity has striven to draw up a programme on the level of the entire Arab world and to follow up the Arab union project which was presented by the leader to Arab heads of state and they decided on amendments to the Arab League's charter.

1) The secretary carried out several contacts with the secretariat of the League of Arab States and the Arab countries and succeeded in reviving the committee created for this purpose after it had ceased to exist in the face of the Arab situation in recent years.

2) A programme was devised to convene the joint higher committees between the Great Jamahiriyah and the fraternal Arab countries. These committees have so far met with Tunisia, Syria, the Sudan, and Egypt and preparations are underway to convene them with the remaining Arab countries.

3) The secretariat of the General Peoples Committee for Unity took upon the responsibility to draw up and implement a programme for co-operation with Chad, the Niger, and Mali on a new basis which takes into account the Islamic Arab ties with these countries.

4) The secretariat of the General Peoples Committee for Unity followed up the activities of the Arab Maghreb Union and participated in the various meetings, institutions, activities and sectors.

5) The secretariat followed up the implementation of the agreement on integration and co-operation with Egypt, and the Sudan and prepared projects to develop co-operation to the desired level for unity.

6) The secretariat took part in strengthening the idea of Arab reconciliation and reaffirmed the Great Jamahiriyah's willingness to exert efforts to bring an end to inter Arab differences and to achieve unity.

The secretariat followed up the implementation of the Great Jamahiriyah's participation in the activities of the Arab League and proceeded to deal with solving political developments in the Arab world, whether on the individual or collective level.

The secretariat resolved to deal with the matter of the lack of presence of peoples committees in the peoples bureaus and solved this by:

a) [no "b)" as received] Establishing a peoples committee consisting of a secretary and members each responsible for either integration, economic affairs, information, and cultural affairs, to be approved by the General Peoples Committee.

The secretary of the General Peoples Committee for Unity detailed the decrees issued by the basic peoples congresses which were drawn up at the general peoples congress at their session which dealt with the strategic plan for pan Arab action which is upheld by the continuous agitation by the leader to united the Arab world. This is the strategic framework of the General Peoples Committee for Unity. The basis for this are the ideas expounded by the leader since the eighties, where he highlighted the problems of Arab security, the water crisis and action to populate the uninhabited areas [word indistinct] Arab map, and also the Arab union proposal.

The secretary added 'The secretariat of the general peoples congress took the following steps in order to preserve the Arab identity south of the Sahara and the area of the Horn of Africa. These included drawing up several agreements within the framework of economic, social and cultural integration with its countries, establishing joint committees to lay down executive programmes for these agreements, ensuring that Arab culture, the Arab language, are widely disseminated and to ensure that the Arab Islamic and African identity of this nation is preserved. The secretariat of the General Peoples Committee for Unity stepped up its efforts to complete the process of integration with the Sudan

whereby the Sudanese president, Lt Gen 'Umar Hasan al-Bashir visited the Great Jamahiriyah last year and several Libyan and Sudanese delegations concerned with political, economic and investment affairs exchanged visits. [no closing quotation marks as received]

Toward this end, the secretary said that the following measures had been taken.

The joint ministerial body convened its second session last year in order to lay down a practical framework for strengthening integration between the two countries in all areas.

The follow up committee last [word indistinct] convened in order to follow up the implementation of the decisions adopted by the ministerial body, particularly those on trade exchanges and solving the negative aspects which are obstructing the way to their improvement.

The value of Libyan exports for last year was about 34 million dinars matched with Sudanese imports at the same value. This created an improvement in the level of trade compared with the previous year, with the total value of the balance of trade being no more than 16 million dinars.

Co-operation with Egypt: The leader conducted two visits to the Republic of Egypt in Ay Annar [January] and Al Timour [October]. President Muhammad Husni Mubarak also visited the Great Jamahiriyah and co-operation and integration between the Great Jamahiriyah and Egypt was followed up in this way.

The follow up committee which was presided over by the secretary of the General Peoples Committee for Unity and the minister of state for cabinet affairs in Egypt convened in the month of al hanibal [August]. Libyan delegations from the various sectors convened meetings with the various specialists in Egypt particularly those concerned with education, investment, agriculture, information, trade, electricity and tourism. Similar Egyptian delegations visited the Great Jamahiriyah. Meetings took place of the working committees which were created to deal with the issue of unifying the regions of Tubruq and Marsa Matruh, programmes were drawn up towards this end, and their implementation will be followed up.

The Great Jamahiriyah and Egypt are bound by eleven agreements which are on the verge of being implemented. Most important is the agreement on the right of ownership, employment, residence and travel. As for the matter of residency in the Sudan or Egypt, the committee dealt with the issue based upon the leader's insistence and belief that there should be no difference between any Arab country and therefore that each and every Arab citizen should have these rights in every Arab country, and therefore that these four freedoms should be included. Towards this end, the following measures should be entrusted to the members of basic peoples congresses to open the Libyan records which were prepared and to distribute them by the secretariat of the General Peoples Committee for Unity and the secretary of the General Peoples Committee for Agricultural Reform, Land Reclamation and Animal Husbandry in order to prepare a forecast with the practical measures which should be pursued. [passage omitted]

Foreign Media Incorrectly Describe People's Congress

LD2701184894 Tripoli JANA in English 1744 GMT 27 Jan 94

[Text] Tripoli, Ay Annar [January] 27 Jamahiriyah News Agency—The Jamahiriyah news agency's local affairs editor noted that certain foreign media outlets continue to use incorrect descriptions and terms when reporting on the General Peoples Congress, describing the latter as a parliament and using such terms as 'minister' and 'president'.

The editor said that the jamahiri system is a contradiction of the system of representation and parliamentarianism - there is nothing in Libya which is termed a 'parliament'. Power in Libya is vested in the people, all the people are involved in decision-making, and it involves everyone of 18 years and over. The peoples committees are appointed through [words indistinct] of direct selection to act on the decisions of these people through peoples committees in all matters related to both foreign and internal policy of the Great Jamahiriyah.

The General Peoples Congress is the general forum of basic peoples congresses, peoples committees, trades unions, federations and vocational syndicates. It does not have the right to take decisions or to discuss things on behalf of others but instead formulates the final product of what is originally decided upon by the basic peoples congresses, the peoples committees and the secretaries of the trades unions, the federations and the vocational [words indistinct] syndicates. They are the members of the [words indistinct] attend the meeting of the congress carrying with them [passage indistinct].

There is no such thing as a president in the jamahiri system. There is only the people. It is they who are the 'president', the 'ruler' who themselves have power vested in them, who determine their own destiny. The peoples congresses are the 'president'. Furthermore, there are no 'ministers' in the jamahiri system who represent the government but there are secretaries of peoples committees whom are elevated from the base through the basic peoples congresses throughout the Great Jamahiriyah with the methods of direct democracy embodied in the direct, free jamahiri choice. The secretaries of their peoples committees do not make decisions nor do they formulate foreign policy on behalf of the masses but instead are entrusted with only the implementation of foreign and internal policy which is drawn up by the masses.

This insistence by the media to use incorrect and contradictory terms and descriptions to report events in the

Great Jamahiriyah. [sentence as received] It is not ignorance on their part, of the true nature of events taking place in Libya, involving the popular system and genuine democracy, practiced by a sovereign free people through the unique jamahiri system where peoples congresses make decisions and peoples committees act on these decisions, but is a deliberate attempt to cover up this great achievment by the Libyan people, who are heralding a new era where all forms of repression, tyranny, exploitation and subjugation are eliminated. It is the era of the masses where the people have power vested in them, and are self determining, without representation or go-betweens, whether an individual or government, whether political party or faction or tribe.

This fallacious appraisal can only be considered as part of a powerful muscle flexing war against the aspirations of a small nation, making a mockery of its freedom aspiring attempts. It is thus a war against humankind where the powerful tyrants are trying to deprive humankind from benefitting from an important experience such as Libya's. At this time, where the world is experiencing destructive conflicts and protests, which never cease due to the conventional systems' inability to solve the political problems they are facing, namely the problem of power, economic problems and the resulting social ills and disasters.

Mauritania

Authorities Release Human Rights Activist

AB2501172094 Libreville Africa No. 1 in French 1230 GMT 25 Jan 94

[Excerpt] With the pressure being so strong, the Nouakchott authorities could not continue keeping Professor Sheikh Sadibou Camara in jail. The chairman of the Mauritanian Human Rights Association was released last night after four days of detention. After he was released last night he explained the reason for his arrest. According to him, the authorities have not forgiven him for his activities against slavery, which still exists in Mauritania. [passage omitted]

Election To Continue Despite Fraud Allegations

AB2501191094 Libreville Africa No. 1 in French 1230 GMT 25 Jan 94

[Excerpts] With three days to go for the municipal elections in Mauritania, the election campaign has been proceeding against a background of accusations and counteraccusations of fraud. This exposes the climate of suspicion prevailing in relations between the authorities and the opposition. Nonetheless, the Mauritanian Government says it is determined to organize the elections in an open manner. As an indication of its goodwill, the lists of polling station heads and assessors have been published. Here is Salem Meshbour Salem with a report from Nouakchott.

[Begin Salem recording] Polling station heads and their assessors have been appointed nationwide. The governors of the 13 provinces that compose Mauritania have been asked by the government to organize introductory seminars on the administrative, technical, and legal procedures for the municipal elections. To this end, a training workshop is currently being held in Nouakchott for all the senior government officials selected to supervise the 28 January municipal elections. [passage omitted]

Despite the training and preparation of government officials charged with ensuring the regularity of the polls, the country's opposition parties do not seem to be convinced in any way. They have condemned the mobilization of 2,000 nonresident soldiers to vote for the candidate of President Ould Taya's Democratic and Social Republican Party in the Nouakchott Arafat district. Among these soldiers, the opposition has mentioned the names and ranks of the National Army and Gendarmerie chiefs of staff. However, the law stipulates that members of the Armed Forces can only vote in their places of residence or work. [end recording]

Sudan

SPLA Official: Dry Season Offensive Under Way

AB2801122094 Paris AFP in French 1618 GMT 27 Jan 94

[Excerpts] Cairo, 27 Jan (AFP)—The Sudanese Government forces' dry season offensive against the guerrilla has been going on in the south of the country "for three weeks" now despite warnings from the United States, the Sudanese People's Liberation Army [SPLA] said in Cairo today. The objective of the government troops is "to take control of the southern borders" with Uganda and Kenya in an attempt "to cut off" the SPLA's "supply lines," Major Daniel Kody, said during a stopover in Egypt.

"A large number of" soldiers, including regular People's Defense Forces—government militia—have been deployed on various operational fronts, Mr. Kody, a Nuba who commands the SPLA in Kaya, western Equatoria, further said. In the Nuba mountains, at about 600 km southwest of Khartoum, fighting is raging on three fronts. Other clashes are taking place in Bahr-al-Ghazal, in the southwest, around the road running parallel to the Aweil-Wau railroad and by which the Army conveys its logistics and troop reinforcements further south. Finally, the Armed Forces and the SPLA are also clashing between Juba and Kit, in line with the government forces' objective to advance toward Pageri and Nimule in eastern Equatoria. [passage omitted]

Mr. Kody said contrary to last year, the government has decided to launch a dry season offensive this year, despite increasing international pressure because "the government is in a serious state of weakness." "The only means at its disposal to obtain breathing space on the

internal level is by achieving military success in the field and to boast about it to the nation," Mr. Kody explained. He said the peace initiative launched by Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda within the framework of the Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development "stands no chance because the government is not serious about its willingness to negotiate." [passage omitted]

Accord Signed With Iran for Commercial Center

EA2701210494 Khartoum SUNA in English 1620 GMT 27 Jan 94

[Text] Khartoum, 27 Jan—Sudan and Iran signed here Wednesday [26 January] memo understanding concerning establishing of Iranian commercial centre.

According to the agreement, Iran will establish the centre in Khartoum state for fair purchase of the Iranian produftions. The centre is free to establish branches in the states.

The memo provided that the Sudanese side will present custom facilities for the commodities imported to the centre, while the centre encourage exchanging of experiences and information between the two countries. Some articles of the agreement came in the framework of supporting and developing of relations and linking of both side according to the religion principles.

The caretaker first undersecretary of industry and commerce, Muhammad Sulayman signed on behalf of Sudan while jihad construction minister's advisor (Mohamed Rida) signed on behalf of Iran.

Yemen

Al-Bid Urges Politicians Abroad To Return

JN2801120494 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0945 GMT 28 Jan 94

[Text] Sanaa, 28 Jan (INA)—'Ali Salim al-Bid, vice chairman of the Yemeni Presidential Council, has urged all Yemeni politicians abroad to return to Yemen and contribute to the construction process in the wake of the recently approved document of understanding among the Yemeni parties.

In statements published by the Yemeni newspapers today, al-Bid said among the national personalities whose return is sought are former South Yemeni President 'Ali Nasir Muhammad, 'Abdallah al-Asnaj, Ibrahim al-Wazir, 'Abd-al-Qawi Makkawi, 'Abdallah 'Abd-al-'Alim, Dr. Ahmad al-Asbahi, and others.

The Yemeni vice president said the real test facing Yemen at the present stage is the implementation of the recent agreement, and emphasized that his party is committed to the implementation of the agreement.

Al-Bid warned against destabilizing the southern parts of the country and threatening those working in oil companies. He said that this situation has forced him to redeploy some military units to protect the companies in Hadramawt.

'Ali Salim al-Bid said he will not allow criminal hands to harm foreigners who work in the country with the companies exploring for Yemeni oil.

New Initiative May Undermine Pledge Document

PM2801113094 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 27 Jan 94 p 3

['Abdallah Hammudah report: "New Initiative Arouses Fears That It May Thwart 'Pledge Document'"]

[Excerpts] London—Patriotic Yemeni forces outside the ruling coalition have made a new initiative to extricate the country from the current political crisis. The initiative is based on eliminating the dispute between the General People's Congress [GPC] and the Yemeni Socialist party [YSP]—on the grounds that these are the two principal forces which achieved unity—and removing the Yemeni Reform Grouping [YRG] from the coalition so that it will become an effective opposition force that can achieve a kind of balance in the political system.

The initiative—which is signed by the National Organization for the Defense of Unity, Democracy, and Social Peace and the Saba' Conference for Yemeni Tribes—says that the YRG's inclusion in the coalition has caused the dispute among the three parties to move into state institutions, hence causing them to play the role of a ruler and an opposition at the same time—which has been associated with the crisis all the time.

A number of Yemeni intellectuals are behind the initiative. Asked about the bad timing of their idea—which comes in the wake of the the announcement of the "Pledge and Accord Document," which is considered a way out of the current crisis—they said that "there are still numerous dangers surrounding the implementation of the document. The official signing (for which arrangements have begun to be made recently) does not guarantee its implementation." [passage omitted]

The initiative urges the YRG to abandon its position on the Presidential Council ('Abd-al-Majid al-Zandani's seat) in favor of the GPC and its ministerial portfolios in favor of the GPC and the YSP. It also urges the formation of a committee consisting of 12 senior officials from the two parties to include for the first time Colonel 'Ali Muhsin al-Ahmar—commander of the 1st Division and half brother of the Yemeni president—from the GPC and Col. Qasim Yahya al-Mahla'i from the YSP, thus representing the military at a high level for the first time in the dialogue between the GPC and the YSP. Because the military establishments of the two sides played an important role in the crisis, whether with regard to the threat of an explosion or securing a mutual deterrent to prevent this explosion.

The initiative, a copy of which AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT has obtained, stresses the need to consider 22 May—the day unity between the two parts of Yemeni was announced in 1990—a starting point for resolving the crisis, building a modern state organ capable of implementing unionist policies, discussing the nature of the "coalition relationship" between the GPC and the YSP, and "determining the causes of tension and conflict in this relationship," in order to come out with a healthy and sound view to consolidate the elements of stability in the political system.

The initiative also urges the formation of a military committee comprised of the most competent commanders to assume the task of "reformulating the combat doctrine of the Armed Forces, drawing up a new defense strategy, supervising the Armed Forces' withdrawal from the cities and the contact areas (it specifies a distance of 100-150 km on both sides of the previous border between the two parts), drawing up a practical plan to rebuild the Armed Forces and set a ceiling for the troops' number, and reconsidering the haphazard promotions that have taken place over the past three years."

The initiative also calls for reexamining the civil service organ and forming a higher council to supervise administrative reforms, diagnose current problems, draw up a bill to regulate work inside it, and to achieve professional stability for employees "in isolation from partisan and political fluctuations." And also to study "the bad situation in the judiciary, to agree on specific measures to purge it of corruption, to rebuild it in order to ensure its neutrality and independence, and to ban any interference in its affairs by other state authorities."

The initiative also broaches the need to acknowledge the existence of current security conditions and "to analyze the phenomenon of terrorism and political assassinations" in the framework of an honest security study. [passage omitted]

'Abd-al-Ghani on Reconciliation Meeting, Other Issues

JN2801121794 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 28 Jan 94 p 20

[Interview with Presidential Council member 'Abd-al-'Aziz 'Abd-al-Ghani by Salih al-Qallab in Sanaa; date not given]

[Excerpts] [Al-Qallab] We heard that the subcommittee, stemming from the dialogue committee, has instructed those who will participate in the ceremony of the signing of the document of understanding to be ready to travel to Amman within days. Has this issue been settled?

['Abd-al-Ghani] There are two choices—to hold the meeting either in Yemen or Amman. In all cases, we consider the accord document a great achievement, and we insist on signing it, and are ready to sign it. I would like to point out here that the subcommittee has been meeting for some time. It is now planning to discuss the security issue after reaching agreement on the venue. When we talk about the security issue, we mean those measures preceding the signing process, as well as the necessary measures to implement this document after it is signed. These measures include restoring cohesion to the Presidential Council, the Council of Ministers, and all the other state institutions.

[Al-Qallab] We have learned that the committee has set 6 February as a date for signing the document?

['Abd-al-Ghani] Yes, around this date. If the meeting is to be held in Amman, then the date will be agreed upon in the light of His Majesty King Husayn's schedule and his return from his trip abroad, and also in the light of the time the Jordanian authorities need to arrange for such a meeting.

[Al-Qallab] This means that the president and vice president have accepted in principle the invitation that was extended to them by His Majesty King Husayn's adviser?

['Abd-al-Ghani] Yes, we have accepted the invitation with gratitude and appreciation. [passage omitted]

[Al-Qallab] Egypt has more than once complained that Yemen has turned into a base for the elements and sides which work against it. Is there any coordination between you and Egypt on these issues?

['Abd-al-Ghani] We denounce all actions aimed against the security of the brothers in Egypt and elsewhere. We contacted the Egyptian brothers and told them that we are fully ready to cooperate with them to check any action meant to harm fraternal Egypt. We are against terrorism and we denounce it in part and parcel anywhere in the world.

[Al-Qallab] Have you arrested any non-Yemeni elements?

['Abd-al-Ghani] We have arrested a number of Arabs who fought in Afghanistan. We have the full list of the names of members of this organization inside and outside Yemen. [passage omitted]

Jordanian Minister Signs Overland Transport Accord

JN2701155394 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1400 GMT 27 Jan 94

[Text] Baghdad, 27 Jan (INA)—The minutes of the 27th session of the General Assembly of the Iraqi-Jordanian Overland Transport Company were signed here today. The meetings lasted two days.

The minutes were signed for Iraq by Transport and Communications Minister Ahmad Murtada and for Jordan by Transport Minister Adib Halasah.

At the signing ceremony, Ahmad Murtada stressed Iraq's eagerness to promote cooperation with fraternal Jordan, especially in transportation.

Jordanian Transport Minister Adib Halasah asserted his country's eagerness to enhance cooperation with Iraq, especially at this stage during which the Iraqi people are suffering as a result of an unjust embargo which has no legal foundations whatsoever.

The minutes approved the company's financial and operational report for last year, as well as the transport operations of the company's trucks inside the two fraternal countries.

The director general of the Iraqi-Jordanian Overland Transport Company told INA the minutes also provide for 100 more trucks to be added to the fleet traveling between Iraq and Jordan, thus raising its total to 520 trucks.

Minister Departs

JN2801130094 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1025 GMT 28 Jan 94

[Text] Baghdad, 28 Jan (INA)—Jordanian Transport Minister Adib Halasah and his delegation left Baghdad today after taking part in the 27th session of the General Assembly of the Iraqi-Jordanian Overland Transport Company, which concluded in Baghdad yesterday.

In a statement to the Iraqi News Agency, Adib Halasah said the meetings of this session and its positive results have emphasized the eagerness of the two sisterly states to increase and expand bilateral cooperation, especially in the transport field in a manner that secures the flow, and increases the capacity of transporting goods and food to the Iraqi people.

The Jordanian minister condemned the continued unjust siege imposed on the Iraqi people, and described it as unjust and as constituting a blatant violation of international and human laws and norms.

Rabin on Cairo Talks, King Husayn's Remarks

TA2701170994 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1400 GMT 27 Jan 94

[Text] No progress has been made so far in the Cairo talks. This came out in remarks the prime minister made this afternoon. Rabin said that we should wait for the meeting between the drafting teams to end in order to assess the extent of their progress before the Peres-'Arafat meeting in Davos. Israeli sources report that there are difficulties in the Cairo talks, and wide gaps still exist between the stands. The prime minister also addressed the statement made yesterday by Jordan's King Husayn, saying that the king's willingness to meet him is an important move forward, although any impending meeting has not yet been discussed. Our political correspondent Udi Segal reports:

Some good news first: Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin views King Husayn's remarks last night as an important development. In Jerusalem, satisfaction was expressed regarding the king's remarks, although they too are taken with a pinch of salt, just as every utterance the king makes. Jerusalem sources believe that Husayn's remarks contain the following message: I may be linked with Syria and al-Asad, but I am no protege of the Syrian president. I am the leader of an independent state.

Rabin was satisfied with the Jordanian king's remarks, although he does not foresee a meeting in the next few days; a few weeks perhaps. A few minutes ago, we asked him:

[Begin recording] [Correspondent Segal] Have you started packing for your trip to Amman?

[Rabin] I read King Husayn's statement carefully. If indeed he is showing willingness to hold a meeting, I will only be too happy. Currently, I know nothing about timetables, nor do I know what is required before the meeting. In his statement, he said that certain preparation is required before the meeting takes place. We are willing to make the preparations. As a rule, however, the very statement about his willingness to hold a meeting with me in public constitutes an important move forward. [end recording]

Regarding the Palestinian track, no progress has yet been made in the Cairo deliberations between the Israeli and the Palestinian teams drafting the working papers. The differences in principle are still those regarding Israel's demand to have suspects inspected at the crossings in what has been called a sterile room, a small room, or an isolated cell. Israel agrees not to have the suspects inspected by an Israeli representative there, but with electronic devices. It demands, however, that the inspection of the suspects be held in a separate room. Prime Minister Rabin also did not have anything new and encouraging to report:

[Begin Rabin recording] At this time, I cannot say for certain that the differences or stands have been bridged. We will hear a report about what went on in Cairo. We will meet this evening, and we will see. [end recording]

At the same time, some Jerusalem sources have said that even if no progress is made, and even if the security issues are not fully finalized in Cairo, progress must be made in Davos—at least from the Palestinian point of view. The negotiations there will be held with 'Arafat, which simply means that anything can happen.

Peres on Davos Talks, Syria, Husayn Remarks

TA2701194594 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Arabic 1630 GMT 27 Jan 93

[Studio interview with Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres by Shlomo Ganor and Eli Nisan; date not given; from the weekly "Encounter" program—recorded in Hebrew with Arabic subtitles; processed from the Hebrew]

[Excerpts] [passage omitted] [Nisan] What is expected to take place in your upcoming talks with Yasir 'Arafat?

[Peres] We will make a supreme effort to reach agreement on the issues still in dispute. Also, I believe we will prepare for the following meetings. In the meeting we had in Oslo we discussed two important issues: One, regarding the elections, I told Mr. 'Arafat that if the Palestinians decide, for example, to hold municipal elections before holding general elections, naturally we will not oppose this. It is their decision to make. The other issue, which I proposed and which was accepted, was that the negotiations about early empowerment [last two words in English] will be held in Taba following the current negotiations. Naturally, Jericho will then be, to a large extent, its administrative center.

[Ganor] Did you get a positive reply to your suggestion that the elections to the municipal and rural councils be held prior to the elections to the autonomy council?

[Peres] I have not received a reply to that yet, but I believe that they view it positively. I received a positive reply regarding the issue of early empowerment.

[Nisan] Seeing the difficulties in the negotiations with the PLO, how involved is Mubarak, and Egypt in general, in the attempts to bring the Israeli and the PLO stands closer to attaining the implementation of the agreement?

[Peres] The Egyptians are certainly trying to play a constructive role, which today is called a facilitator [last word in English]. Sometimes it also helps. For example, last time we were in Cairo for negotiations, they were concluded in President Mubarak's office. In fact, he chaired the meeting. There we agreed that I and Abu-Mazin [Mahmud 'Abbas] go out to meet the press together and report on the agreements made by the two delegations. I did just that, and Mr. Abu-Mazin stood at my side and confirmed my remarks. They are called the Cairo understandings.

[Ganor] Will the differences be really settled in Davos?

[Peres] I am not certain. I cannot make guesses. Talks are being held in Cairo at this very minute to search for a way out. Some of the work was done there, although I am afraid that a lot of work was left for the two of us in Davos.

[Nisan] What do you feel as you prepare to leave for Davos this evening? The impression is that the optimism of the past is today somewhat qualified and you are more careful in your optimistic remarks?

[Peres] I have always been careful regarding dates and places because it does not only depend on us or me. Basic strategic optimism has prevailed, but it is not only up to our side to bridge all the gaps.

[Nisan] Are you not trying to lower expectations toward the meeting in Davos?

[Peres] That is because some people have downplayed the importance of the existing differences—they are not simple, but are serious. We are working hard to find previously untried solutions. The past solutions were not good enough either.

[Ganor] Does that mean that 13 April—the forecasted date for the completion of the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and Jericho—is not realistic?

[Peres] It is hard to tell. If we really finalize things in Davos, we could perhaps meet this date. If not, it will take another month.

[Ganor] This means that there are no longer sacred dates?

[Peres] There are dates we have agreed upon. Agreed-upon things are sacred. According to the agreement, we have to complete the withdrawal four months after the agreement is signed. It has not yet been signed. Thus, we always have four months from that date to work. [passage omitted]

[Ganor] Mr. Peres, with your permission we will move on to discuss the Syrian track. Has Israel indeed received an unequivocal explanation from Syria that it is prepared to reach a separate agreement with Israel that will stand on its own?

[Peres] What we have been told exactly is that the Syrians are prepared to conduct Syrian-Israeli negotiations. In other words, the negotiation process itself will stand on its own. We still do not know what the outcome will be. However, I would like to tell you something. Speaking for myself, I accept the Syrian challenge. Mr. al-'Allaf, the head of the Syrian delegation told our chief negotiator Itamar Rabinovich that al-Asad had spoken in Geneva not as Syria's ruler but as the leader of the whole Arab world. Okay. Let al-Asad bring peace to the entire Arab world, not just to us. When the Arabs speak of a comprehensive peace they are including everything Israel has included. A comprehensive peace includes everything that is part of the Arab world. It is about time that all the Arab countries, except for the three rogue states—Iraq, Iran, and Libya—sit down at the negotiating table together with al-Asad, establish diplomatic relations with Israel, open borders and markets, etc.

[Ganor] Was Israel satisfied with this Syrian explanation?

[Peres] The Syrians have not said this yet. I say that Israel must state that a comprehensive peace does not only pertain to Israel's assets but also to the attitude of the Arab world and diplomatic relations with Israel.

[Ganor] Mr. Peres, what if the negotiations with Syria take a long time, in light of the obstacles and differences between both parties' positions? Do you see any possibility of reaching an interim accord with the Syrians prior to a comprehensive peace agreement?

[Peres] I doubt that Syria will agree to this. Perhaps Israel could consider it but I do not see Syria going for it. Look, I think we have to either achieve a comprehensive peace or negotiate with each party on a separate basis. We must differentiate between separate and successive negotiations with each party and the peace that will eventually encompass all the parties and enable us to build a new Middle East.

[Ganor] Which steps should be taken in order to accelerate the negotiations between Syria and Israel? Would you recommend a summit meeting between foreign ministers or heads of government?

[Peres] The psychological dimension must undoubtedly be considered. The negotiations should be opened up on all sides and both formal and informal contacts should be held. The difference between civil servants and ministers, for example, is that the latter enjoy one privilege: They can make mistakes. In negotiations you must have people that can make mistakes because if you only send people who are forbidden to err, the negotiations will not make progress. Today, the negotiations are being held on one narrow track, infested with microphones, and the echo is louder than the actual words. Anything that is said reverberates far more than warranted.

[Ganor] How would you sum up this week of talks in Washington on the Syrian track?

[Peres] The talks were held in a positive atmosphere but not much progress was made.

[Nisan] Mr. Peres, on the basis of the Egyptian precedent, would you support stationing U.S. troops between the Syrian and Israeli armies in order to promote the negotiations with Syria?

[Peres] I think that with Syria, just as was the case with Egypt, we must first make a supreme effort to create a situation in which we will not need to station any foreign troops. Then we shall see. You know, in the Egyptian case, the idea of stationing U.S. troops was not so much an essential element of the peace itself, it was more like the final validation. So let us first achieve peace and then we will seek a way to give it a final stamp of approval.

[Ganor] How involved is the United States in this respect? Did they offer their good services this week?

[Peres] First of all, the Americans are the ones who are urging both parties to meet. They are trying to bridge the difficulties both parties encounter along the way, and the United States is playing the role of an honest broker [last two words in English].

[Ganor] Last night we saw this when King Husayn appeared at Secretary of State Christopher's side. Yesterday, King Husayn publicly admitted for the first time that he had met with all Israeli prime ministers, including yourself Mr. Peres, except for the late Menahem Begin. What is your reaction to his professed readiness to publicly meet with the Israeli prime minister?

[Peres] I attach great importance to this. One of the drawbacks in Israel's relationship with Jordan—a relationship which also has many advantages—has always been this coyness and timidity, as though peace is something that should be kept secret. You know, the Jordanians were furious on numerous occasions when Israel leaked the news of the meetings.

[Ganor] For example, on 3 November when you met with....

[Peres, interrupting] Now people are starting to understand what happened then.

[Ganor] So what happened then?

[Peres] Patience. You will have to wait a little bit more for me to reveal all my secrets. On the other hand, we told the Jordanians that it is time to legitimize peace. What must be hidden here? At least we can reveal things about the peace negotiations. In my opinion, a very important step forward has now been taken. It is the second step because the first step was the meeting between Crown Prince Hasan and myself at the White House together with President Clinton. Both Jews and Arabs, Jordanians and Israelis, should be shown that peace is nothing to be ashamed about and there is no need to hide it and to act as though it was some kind of underground activity. Peace is a great hope that should be expressed proudly so it can influence everyone, and I am convinced that despite the presence of some religious fanatics in Jordan, most Jordanian citizens support peace. I was very impressed with the level of culture and education among the Jordanian people.

[Ganor] Could you tell us what kind of impression the Jordanian monarch left on you following your meetings?

[Peres] He left an excellent impression of a very serious and experienced man, full of goodwill, in control of all the facts and of himself. I believe him to be a man who really prays for peace and yearns for it from the depth of his heart.

[Ganor] The question is when. Did you receive any indication of that in your last meeting with him on 3 November?

[Peres] As far as King Husayn is concerned, the question of when is tied to other constraints. We constantly say that we are surrounded by certain neighbors. He is also surrounded by neighbors, but we only have eyes for our own problems. I can say only one thing: One does not choose one's parents or neighbors. What one can choose is the relationship between neighbors and between parents and children. We are not going to change the fact that we are neighbors but we are going to change our relationship. [passage omitted]

Departs for Davos To Meet 'Arafat

TA2801063194 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0600 GMT 28 Jan 94

[Report by political correspondent Udi Segal]

[Text] Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres left a short time ago for the Swiss ski resort of Davos, where he will meet with PLO leader Yasir 'Arafat tomorrow. Jerusalem believes Davos will not be the last station in the negotiations with the Palestinians. A member of the Israeli delegation to the Swiss talks forecasted last night that 'Arafat and Peres will not sign any agreement tomorrow. This evaluation is based on the reports from Cairo that the drafting team, headed by Uri Savir and Abu-al-'Ala' [Ahmad Quray'], did not reach understandings. Following two days of preparatory talks, the teams managed to produce only a document detailing the points of agreement and disagreement between the PLO and Israel. The two main points of disagreement are still the border crossings—in particular Israel's demand to inspect suspicious-looking Palestinians passing through the crossings—and Jericho's jurisdiction.

Peres and 'Arafat will meet tomorrow, but they may hold preliminary talks today to try to overcome the points in dispute. Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin had a tete-a-tete meeting with Foreign Minister Peres last night prior to Peres' departure for Davos today. Rabin is firm in his opposition to any concessions or further flexibility on security issues. That is the position Peres presented to 'Arafat in Oslo, and although the atmosphere there was optimistic, the evaluations regarding Davos are more pessimistic.

Gur: 'Huge Quantities of Weapons' Hoarded in Strip

TA2701124394 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 27 Jan 94 p A6

[Report by Gid'on Alon and Tzvi Zrahya]

[Excerpt] Deputy Defense Minister Mordekhay Gur has disclosed that the Gaza Strip Palestinians have hoarded huge quantities of weapons. Replying to three motions to the Knesset agenda by Knesset Members Hanan Porat

(National Religious Party), Efrayim Gur (Likud), and Pini Badash (Tzomet), Gur said that since the talks on Palestinian self-rule in the Gaza Strip were launched, the local residents, motivated by the fear of internal strife, have been hoarding large quantities of weapons.

Gur said that the security forces have been taking action against this trend, attempting to reduce the quantities of weapons in the Strip.

He admitted that there is apprehension that the large quantities of weapons would be also directed against Israelis, but noted that the incidence of attacks on the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] involving firearms is not high at this stage. [passage omitted]

F-15I Reportedly To Be IAF Fighter Aircraft

TA2701192894 Jerusalem New Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 27 Jan 94

[Video report by Army affairs correspondent Roni Daniyel]

[Text] The Israel Air Force's [IAF] future fighter aircraft will be the F-15I, produced by the McDonnell Douglas Corporation. The first planes will arrive in Israel in a short time.

Today it is official and final. The agonizing decision has been made and the F-15I will be the IAF's next fighter jet. Each plane costs approximately $100 million and the Defense Ministry's budget permits the purchase of 20 such planes. There was a lot of hesitation and qualms by IAF officers. They found it hard to choose between 20 F-15's or 50 F-16's at the same price. However, the General Staff ultimately opted for the F-15. The long range threats facing Israel weighed the decision in its favor, and the offices of McDonnell Douglas in Israel and abroad are celebrating a huge victory. The United States is not only supplying Israel with the most advanced plane of its kind; it is no less importantly supplying the accompanying technology and this already constitutes a qualitative leap. It will be possible to install Israeli systems in this model aircraft and it will take time until the IAF can paint its insignia on their wings.

Former senior IAF officers this evening criticized the decision to purchase the F-15I.

Commander Comments on F-15I Deal

TA2801114894 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1100 GMT 28 Jan 94

[Text] Major General Herzl Budinger, the Air Force commander, disclosed that in the wake of the F-15I deal, the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] and the Air Force in particular are postponing the implementation of several plans. For instance, the procurement of Black Hawk helicopters is being put off until 1998.

Gen. Budinger told a news conference called to mark the deal with McDonnell Douglas Corporation that it would be inconceivable for rival Lockheed to cease all purchases in Israel immediately. He believes such threats were not made by the company's management in the United States but by Elul, which represents McDonnell Douglas in Israel. He sharply attacked the company representatives, saying that they had conducted a personal campaign against him.

Arms, Training Deal With Congo Reported

TA2801152494 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 28 Jan 94 pp 1, 10

[Report by Sha'ul Peretz]

[Excerpts] A group of 20 senior reserve officers who formerly served in elite units and the Shin Bet have been hired to train soldiers of the Congo-Brazzaville Army.

This is part of a giant arms and military equipment sale, worth tens of millions of dollars, by Israel Military Industries and other defense manufacturers. An agreement to this effect was recently been signed between private Israeli entrepreneurs and the Congo Government. In an appendix to the agreement, the Israeli company pledged to provide the Congolese Army with guidance and training.

The "Congo deal" has recently been approved by the Defense Ministry's Defense Sales Department. At the same time, the deal also met some opposition due to the fact that Congolese loyal to the president have been fighting the supporters of the prime minister. It is important to note that the deal was made with Congo-Brazzaville in West Africa, and not with its neighbor Zaire, also known as Congo-Kinshasa.

The company behind the deal is Lavdan, a subsidiary of the public corporation Qardan Investments [company names as published]. The names of the persons who are actually behind the deal are not yet known, but the man named in charge of executing the training project is Brigadier General Ze'ev Zakharin (Reserves), who is considered an expert in training foreign armies.

Zakharin (45), served as the commander of the liaison unit to Lebanon and won praise for his work in training the South Lebanese Army. [passage omitted]

Reacting to the report, the Lavdan company issued the following statement: "The deal mentioned includes the supply of equipment and guidance which the Israeli companies will provide to the African country. Beyond this activity, there is no network of persons or elements on behalf of our company in that country."

The Defense Ministry spokesman reacted: "The Defense Ministry is not in the habit of addressing itself to publications concerning defense exports."

Clinton Said Not Yet Adjusted to White House

TA2701123594 Tel Aviv DAVAR in Hebrew 27 Jan 94 p 9

[Editorial: "Making It to Second Grade"]

[Text] Next Sunday [30 January], the Buffalo Bills football team will play against the Dallas Cowboys from Texas to try to erase the loser's brand etched on its collective brow over the past three years, in which the team repeatedly made it to the Super Bowl but tarnished this handsome achievement with consecutive defeats. As for Little Rock Bill Clinton, who did make it to the finals last year, defeating Texan representative George Bush, his true test is still ahead of him—at the next finals in three years.

This week Clinton marked the beginning of his second year in White House. While he did pass first grade, his graduation to second grade is accompanied by the feeling that he has not yet fully adjusted to his new school. In his annual State of the Union address yesterday, Clinton presented America's current priorities: less foreign affairs, less defense, more employment, more health insurance, and above all, more action against crime, which is destroying the Americans from within. The punch line, which got Clinton the most applause, borrowed its terminology from another sports arena: baseball. Like a pitcher whose ball veers from its destination, a third-time violent offender will find himself out or, in this case, inside.

Clinton's address touched on the Middle East in passing: The Rabin-'Arafat handshake on his lawn was mentioned and received in total silence at Congress, where his secretaries, officers, and justices were also sitting. Yet Clinton emphasized his commitment to the attainment of "comprehensive and durable" peace in the region. His intent—territories for peace—cannot be seriously doubted, although he did not bother to spell it out. This does not contradict the departure from tradition which Prime Minister Rabin detected this week in the stand of President al-Asad, who agrees to a bilateral peace that does not depend on the attainment of other agreements. It is a fact that King Husayn and Rafiq al-Hariri are waiting for al-Asad, and not vice versa, while 'Arafat is the last man in the world al-Asad would trust with a veto right over Syria's moves.

In his speech, Clinton maintained that there is no isolationism in America. This assertion in itself must be proven. The Americans have stayed away from involvement in Bosnia—a position which they feel is justified and which the President, who dodged the Vietnam draft, can understand. They temporarily blundered in Somalia, but were quick to announce a date of disengagement and to behead the secretary of defense who was—unjustly—perceived as responsible for some of the casualties in there. All these, as well as the tendency to reduce the U.S. naval and ground troops in Europe and Asia, can offer no encouragement to Washington's friends. For the time being, they can be comforted by the defense aid which refuses to die—$3 billion a year, in Israel's case—and to wait for the future report cards of student Clinton, who lacks the qualities that would make him Super Bill in the eyes of Americans and foreigners.

Soldier Wounded, Arab Murdered in Territories

TA2701055794 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 27 Jan 94

[Text] An Israeli soldier was lightly wounded near Ramallah last night when stones were thrown at an Army car.

In the Gaza Strip, terrorists opened fire on Israelis in three separate incidents. There were no injuries. Two of the incidents occurred in Gush Qatif, when terrorists opened fire on Israeli cars. The third happened when terrorists shot at an Army patrol in Gaza.

In Khan Yunus, two homemade explosive devices were thrown at IDF [Israel Defense Forces] and Border Police patrols. There were no injuries in that incident either.

A resident of the Jabalyah refugee camp was murdered last night. He was believed by his attackers to be cooperating with Israel. Members of his family brought him to a nearby Army base, but efforts to save him failed, and he died of his wounds.

Ben-Eli'ezer Denies Plan To Expand Jerusalem

TA2601180194 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1600 GMT 26 Jan 94

[Text] The settlers' operation to double the number of settlements begins in Qiryat Arba' this evening. Our settlement affairs correspondent Gil Litman reports that several dozen settlers from Judaea and Samaria arrived in Qiryat Arba' and started preparations for setting up a new presettlement about one km from Qiryat Arba'. Our correspondent reports that the settlers set up a special headquarters for this purpose in a Qiryat Arba' apartment, and the operation is being conducted to all intents and purposes as a military operation. The heads of the operation told our correspondent they have not coordinated their actions with the IDF [Israel Defense Forces], and that if they are asked to evacuate the place they will evince passive resistance.

Reacting to the settlement operation, Minister Binyamin Ben-Eli'ezer said Israel is a state of law and whoever breaks the law in Qiryat Arba' will be dealt with in the same manner as someone breaking the law in Herzliyya. Minister Ben-Eli'ezer made these remarks during a tour with the heads of his ministry to the 'Etzyon Bloc and Ma'ale Adumim.

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 1605 GMT on 26 January carries a report on Minister Ben-Eli'ezer's tour, in which correspondent Gil Litman asks the minister whether the government intends to territorially unite Jerusalem with Ma'ale Adumim on the east and the 'Etzyon Bloc on the south. Minister Ben-Eli'ezer is quoted as saying: "I want to tell you that I do not know

of any such territorial linkage plan." Later on Ben-Eli'ezer adds: "If you ask me whether there is any plan to link the 'Etzyon Bloc to Jerusalem, the answer is negative."]

Party Urges Recognition of Syrian Golan Sovereignty

TA2701180094 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 27 Jan 94 p A4

[Report by party affairs correspondent Yerah Tal]

[Excerpt] MAPAM's [United Workers Party] 11th convention yesterday called for an Israeli recognition of Syria's sovereignty over the Golan Heights—provided that Syria commit itself to full peace with Israel, full normalization, meticulous security arrangements "conditioned on space and time," and arrangements that would secure the water resources essential to Israel's existence.

In its resolutions, the convention stresses that the Israeli recognition of Syrian sovereignty over the Golan should not necessarily correspond with physical Israeli presence on the Golan, "the extent and duration of which will be determined in the negotiations on the peace accord."

The convention resolutions regarding Syria further say that MAPAM views the formula the prime minister coined—according to which the depth of peace will match the depth of withdrawal—"as a starting point for the formation of the government's policy on the issue of the Golan Heights.

"Regarding the problem of the Golan Heights, Israel's supreme interest is the security aspect, that is preventing the Golan from turning into a springboard for attacks against Israel in general and the Galilee in particular," the resolution says. At the same time, MAPAM reiterates its stand that the Golan settlements will not be an obstacle on the road to peace.

On the Palestinian issue, the MAPAM convention calls on the Palestinian leadership "to take into consideration the dynamic developments in the region, and to focus on implementing the Declaration of Principles on both the interim arrangement and the Gaza-Jericho First agreement."

The convention calls on the PLO leadership and the Israeli Government to make a joint efforts to enhance the negotiations and attain the desired agreement. Another resolution states that "over the past two decades, MAPAM has maintained that a mutual recognition of both nations' right for self determination lies at the foundation of peace between them. The readiness to accept UN Resolutions 242 and 338, and the willingness to return land for peace are a necessary conHition for an Israeli peace policy. MAPAM has always regarded the autonomy as a temporary introduction to the permanent solution that would be founded on those principles." [passage omitted]

Poll Shows Drop in Support for Labor, Meretz

TA2801092494 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 28 Jan 94 p 1

[YEDI'OT AHARONOT public opinion poll conducted by the Dahaf Institute under the management of Dr. Mina Tzemah]

[Text] Question: If the Knesset elections were held today, how would you vote? Results quoted in number of Knesset seats.

	Poll results	Present number
Labor	41	44
Likud	35	32
Meretz	11	12
Tzomet	10	8
Moledet	2	3
National Religious Party	7	6
Agudat Yisra'el	4	4
SHAS [Torah Observing Sephardim]	5	6
HADASH [Democratic Front for Peace and Equality]	3	3
Arab Democratic Party	2	2

Question: Are you pleased/displeased with the way the Israeli Government conducted the negotiations with the Palestinians?

Pleased—44 percent; displeased—55; no reply—1 percent.

Question: Are you pleased/displeased with the way the Israeli Government is conducting the negotiations with Syria?

Pleased—45 percent; displeased—52; no reply—3 percent.

The poll was conducted on 25 and 26 January among 581 interviewees who constitute a representative sample of Israel's adult population. The margin of error is 4 percent.

King Addresses Journalists at End of U.S. Visit

King, Christopher Respond to Questions

JN2701201894 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 27 Jan 94

[Excerpts] His Majesty King Husayn has concluded his visit to the United States and left for Austria following several meetings in Washington, the last of which was with the U.S. secretary of state. [passage omitted]

The way Jordan thinks about the nature of the conflict, how it should be resolved, and the future of the region in light of comprehensive peace has been appreciated by the U.S. Administration and public opinion. U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher reiterated U.S. appreciation for His Majesty King Husayn's leading role in supporting the peace process to allow it to achieve its objectives.

[Begin recording, in English] [Christopher] I am very pleased to welcome here to the State Department His Majesty King Husayn. He's a rather frequent visitor of the United States, but each time he's very welcome and this time his visit happens to coincide with the renewal of the bilateral discussions between Jordan and Israel here in Washington with a streamlined, though informal, setting. So I think prospects are very good for making progress there. I am very pleased by a number of developments in the relations between the U.S. and Jordan since the last time I met with the king. So in many respects, this is a very happy occasion, and, as I always do when I see him, I look forward to it by welcoming you here, your majesty. It is a great pleasure to have you here.

[Husayn] Thank you very, very much indeed, sir, for the warm and kind welcome. It is a pleasure to be back in Washington. I've had the privilege of meeting with the President and meeting with many of my friends, and now this is really a wonderful opportunity to be with you, sir. We've seen you in the area. We appreciate all the efforts that you've made in the cause of our arrival at a just and comprehensive peace in our region. And you have our gratitude, admiration, and respect.

[Reporter] [words indistinct] expect to conclude a peace treaty with Israel? I represent Israel television.

[Husayn] Sir, I hope that we will have started in earnest now to discuss all items in the agenda and to cover all these subjects. And I believe our approach is the right one to try to resolve all the problems that are there and the crowning achievement will be a peace treaty [words indistinct].

[Reporter] Your Majesty: Can you elaborate on what you mean by full peace with Israel?

[Husayn] Full peace is full peace. It is a peace that brings people together, that gives them the opportunities they never had, that changes the face of our region as a whole, that is our contribution to future regions.

[Reporter] [words indistinct] Israeli to sign, to move ahead at all, and not waiting for anybody else. Is Jordan ready to move ahead without waiting for anybody else?

[Husayn] We are not waiting for anybody, but we hope that, as things will move, we will all meet before too long, having accomplished our work in establishing the just and lasting peace that we have sought for so long.

[Reporter] What can you tell us about the talks that are taking place in Washington now? Are they making enough progress for them to ask the full delegations to come next week?

[Christopher] You know, I've just returned from abroad, and the talks have just started, so I think it's too early to say, but the new format in which the heads of delegations meet under streamlined conditions, I think, is very promising, and we'll see in a week or so whether or not the full delegations should come here. One thing I would emphasize, and that is, I feel that real progress can be made in the format that they now have. So I wouldn't make judging progress dependent on whether and when the full delegations will come here.

[Reporter] Mr. Secretary: Jordan seems to be very close to an agreement with Israel and I feel that they could have had it, if not last year, probably 10 years ago. Do you think that Jordan should move ahead and set an example to the Syrian, or does the use of the codeword comprehensive mean that you agree that Jordan ought to wait for the others and [word indistinct] both sign together?

[Christopher] You know, the role the United States has in these conversations and negotiations is the role of a cosponsor. I think the timing is really up to the parties, and I wouldn't want to try to impose United States views, with respect to timing. What we want to see is steady progress on all fronts, and I think the king has given you his indication that they are making steady progress on all fronts. So I would not, I think it will be too arrogant for the United States to try to suggest to the parties a precise timing under which they'll move ahead. Steady progress is what we now see. Thank you very much.

[Husayn] Thank you sir. [end recording] [passage omitted]

King Holds News Conference

JN2801093994 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1833 GMT 27 Jan 94

[News conference by King Husayn with Arab and international media representatives in Washington "at the conclusion of his visit to the United States"—recorded, in English except where noted]

[Text] [Husayn] I welcome the brother representatives of the media to this meeting here in Washington. [preceding sentence in Arabic]

Ladies and Gentlemen. I'd like to say how pleased I am to have this opportunity to be with you here on this last day of our visit to Washington this time. It has been a very, very good visit all together, a private visit in a sense. I've had the chance to have the preplanned medical checkup and I'm told that I have a clean bill of health which will require me only to have another one later in the summer and then to revert to a normal annual check up.

Obviously, I came to Washington on this visit and at this very, very important time. I had the very great pleasure and privilege of meeting the president who was kind enough to see me despite his very heavy and demanding commitments and schedule. My admiration for him has grown ever since I have known him. We have been in constant touch. More than ever before, I feel that we are all fortunate in our region to have President Clinton, a man with a big heart, with the great knowledge that he has accumulated of every aspect of the problems we are trying to resolve and a clear determination to help see us through, and see with us hopefully the breaking of the dawn of peace in our entire region, a man of integrity and determination.

I've had several occasions to visit with friends. I've spoken on several occasions during this visit and I realize right now that we are beginning once again to negotiate on the Jordanian-Israeli track as well as on the other ones. There had been developments in the recent past including the important meeting between the president and my brother President Hafiz al-Asad. I believe it was a successful meeting and I hope that we will see progress on all tracks leading to our objective of achieving a comprehensive peace. As far as we are concerned in Jordan, we are now moving to address all the subjects that are listed in the agenda, the Jordanian-Israeli agenda, and I hope that we will see success in dealing with all of these problems in a satisfactory way. I hope we can achieve symmetry in terms of the interests of both sides. I hope that, if it is possible, we will see the implementation of some of the agreements as we go along which will help sensitize people to what peace really means and what the promise of peace really is.

Some may have questioned this approach. As far as we are concerned, we are confident that we are right in the sense that we are moving to address all the problems and to find solutions for them so that the crowning achievement of this whole process is the ratification of a peace treaty. Hopefully it will come within the context of peace between all the parties concerned in the region. But in any event, we have resisted the suggestion, that came up once in a while in the recent past, that we ratify a piece of paper and then begin to negotiate what it means. We believe that the right approach is to negotiate all the subjects. We are open-minded and determined and hopefully the result will be the kind of peace that people can live with and protect and enjoy.

Things are moving quite rapidly and I hope that before too long we will see some tangible results which will be the legacy that we can leave for future generations in our region and in the world.

So, I'd be more than happy now to answer any of your questions or to hear any of your comments.

[Reporter] Your Majesty, [words indistict] (?implementation) of the Israeli-Palestinian Declaration of Principles, assuming they can reach final closure and begin to implement the agreement, will that have an impact on the pace at which Jordan signs a peace treaty or negotiates a peace treaty with Israel?

[Husayn] Well I certainly hope, sir, that they will make progress and that they will implement what they agreed upon and they will find solutions to clarify what they haven't agreed upon as yet. As far as we are concerned, we are going to help as much as we can, and our support for our Palestinian brethren in terms of Jordan will continue. And as far as the work ahead, there are obviously many areas where there will be bilateral, multilateral, trilateral negotiations. We have made it very, very clear to our Palestinian brethren that we are ready to help when we know what is needed and when we are approached and when we reach agreement with them over any subject of interest. But in terms of the background, I believe that we started together in Madrid, we went to Madrid, in Jordan's case, following a national meeting that was attended by all elected bodies in the country and representatives of our people and we decided that we have to move with conviction towards the establishment of peace.

We provided the umbrella for the joint delegation, we enabled our Palestinian brethren to speak for themselves and we went to Moscow and we have attended every meeting dealing with peace. And then we finally came to Washington and of course we started to work together until a very monumental event, a very historic event took place on the 13th of September, when the Israelis and the Palestinians recognized each other and met here in the city of Washington, outside the White House. We saw that handshake that will be remembered in the times ahead.

So the umbrella has been shut down and relegated to the closets of history but nonetheless, we immediately hailed what happened as a courageous step on both sides in terms of a vision of the future and a sense of responsibility towards generations to come. And we immediately, on the 14th of September, ratified the agenda that we had held up to that time to see some progress on the Palestinian track.

Now we are dealing with the agenda and all the items there and I hope we will see some rapid progress. In the meantime, all the other parties are involved and engaged and it certainly is my hope that what will come out is a comprehensive peace at the end. But now we are dealing with our own problem. And I think that they are complex

and they will be demanding of time and effort and yet we are going at our own speed now.

[Reporter] Some of the Palestinian leadership would believe that one of the problems, which is security of Jericho and whether Palestinians alone will be able to police the border between Jericho and Jordan, there is some in the Palestinian leadership who suggest that Jordan has objected to the idea that Palestinians would be able to control the border by themselves and that Jordan made those objections known to the United State and to Israel.

[Husayn] I would like to categorically deny that, and suggest that it was very unfortunate that such a suggestion should even be made. Jordan is a state, sir. Jordan has its borders, Jordan has its positions on the bridges and Jordan continues to have the right to exercise looking after its borders and its territories. We were informed that the Oslo agreement stipulated that external security was Israel's domain for the initial phases. We did not comment in any form or way. We heard what you all heard and obviously if the Palestinians are able to look after the bridges on their side, that is most welcome by us. But that is something that Israel and the Palestinians have to decide upon. It is nothing that reflects on us or concerns us in any way except in the hope that whatever happens will help our brethren in the occupied territories and will make them feel that there is real progress towards a change, a change in the quality of life, a change in conditions that have persisted for 26 terrible years.

[Reporter] [words indistinct] Your Majesty, could you assess your relationship with the PLO leaders right now, particularly Chairman 'Arafat, and comment on whether you think it will be natural and inevitable for Jordan's large Palestinian population to look for leadership both to your majesty and to the PLO?

[Husayn] As far as we are concerned, sir, and facing all the realities of today as we have done in the past, we in Jordan, all Jordanians, regardless of their origins are members of one family that have and will continue to share equal rights until such time that any would wish otherwise or have the opportunity to exercise another option. Jordan is unique in the Arab world in that sense, which has been our approach throughout. We will continue to help our brethren to the best our ability in the occupied territories, we will continue to hope, as we have made it very, very clear that the leadership of the Palestinians will rise to the level of the challenges it faces right now. We hope and pray that the steps that will be taken will lead eventually to the fulfillment of Palestinian aspirations regarding Palestinian rights on Palestinian soil, in terms of democracy, pluralism, respect for human rights. We hope that all will have part in shaping the future, both inside and outside, and particularly those who have lived through the 26 years of occupation and endured them and hung to their land, and endured all the difficulties that are known to all.

I hope that the Palestinian institutions will come into being, I hope that there will be the potential for the very talented Palestinians within the region and throughout the world to put their resources and energies into the coming phase. So as far as we are concerned, we will continue to help in any way we can. If you are referring to our relations in terms of the future, I hope that they will be very clear. We will implement whatever we agree upon, we will always call for cooperation, coordination to the best of our abilities, but also we are going to be very, very clear. If we don't have the kind of coordination that is needed, we will make it public. We cannot assume responsibilities for something that we are not involved in.

Regarding the future relationship, I believe that this is something for people to decide, in time.

[Reporter] Your Majesty, it is obvious from what you just said, and in past pronouncements publicly and privately, that you felt on a number of occasions that [words indistinct] great frustration because of the lack of coordination between you and the PLO leadership, and particularly with Chairman 'Arafat. This is another question about the illusive coordination among the Arabs. You said that you advised Mr. 'Arafat, publicly and privately, to drop the word confederation or confederacy from his political lexicon. I would like you to expand a little bit on that, and would I be stretching it too much to say that, judging from what you just said, you do not believe that the PLO leadership has risen to the occasion, in other words? And if I add one thing, is it true also that you've reached an agreement with President al-Asad of Syria that Jordan and Syria and Lebanon also will sign peace treaties together?

[Husayn] Jordan is moving, Syria is moving, Lebanon is moving. I hope that our objective of a comprehensive peace will be achieved. The Palestinians are moving. I am not talking about the past. I am talking about a critical moment, I am talking about the future. And it is certainly my hope that all of us will rise to the level of their responsibilities, in terms of what is happening and the impact of all that is happening on the future of the region as a whole.

We hope relations are fine, sir, but as far as confederation, maybe the talk about it as a concept was warranted at a certain point in time to help Palestinians reach the point they have reached and enable them to speak for themselves, as they are doing and as they've done both in Oslo and leading on to Washington and on to whatever is happening right now. But as far as the future is concerned, sir, we have lived in the Arab world and we have tried our very best, and between the emotional feelings about Arab unity and between the setbacks that we have had, our position is the following: Jordan and Palestine are very, very close together. We're members of one family. But federations and confederations and whatever cannot be determined by individuals, and depending on their feelings at any point in time. They are the sum total of the conviction of people that this is the right

approach. So we're happy to have been able to help our Palestinian brethren to get where they are and, hopefully, to achieve their objectives. But, as close as we are to them, we'll support them to the best of our abilities, and the future will have to take care of itself when, under conditions of freedom and democratic institutions are there, when people decide and they can have something that is meaningful, that will last. And I believe that will come inevitably, sooner of later. So for the time being, I've asked President 'Arafat to drop this word from his vocabulary, certainly in talking with me. Let's get on with it, let us work from the grassroots upwards. Let us dispel the false impressions that we had any objective other than helping our Palestinian brethren recover their rights on their soil, helping them through the very difficult times that they have endured so far.

[Reporter] Your Majesty, what are you going to do for the refugees' problem in the Arab world? Do you envisage peace and signature of a peace agreement without a solution to this problem? If your majesty will give me an answer in Arabic, please?

[Husayn, in Arabic] This is one of the important issues that must be addressed by everybody. As far as we are concerned in Jordan, as I have said a short while ago, we are highly sensitive to this issue regarding the needs of people. Peace should entail a radical change toward the better in terms of the people's life and the aspired-for peace. Naturally, there are resolutions on either return or compensation, or any other method, but this dimension must be addressed shortly so peace can have a meaning and there will be a lasting peace that gives everybody a good opportunity to live under this peace.

[Reporter] Your Majesty, we have seen another (?goal) handshake recently between King Fahd and and Mr. Yasir 'Arafat, though from what we have seen in photographs, mercifully it was without the traditional Arab kisses. When are we going to see your majesty shaking hands also with King Fahd, considering the fact that Jordan has a very important role to play in the peace process?

[Husayn] If you take it that way, I have been a follower of my grandfather and his late Majesty King 'Abd-al-'Aziz Bin-Sa'ud, who came together and settled their differences and left us the responsibility to work together as members of one family in the interest of our nation. Our relations have passed through a period, I think, that there are so many aspects that have to be addressed and could be addressed when we are able to meet face to face, as I have tried since the outset. As far as we are concerned, we are most anxious to see the relations return to their warmth and to be based on mutual confidence and trust and to be based on the desire to cooperate in the interest of the Arab nation as a whole. I hope the time will come, and I think we are moving in the right direction. And I believe when we have a chance to meet, we'll discover that it was a very serious storm in a teacup, and I hope that our brethren in Saudi Arabia will realize that we never meant them any harm, nor did we cause them any harm at all.

[Reporter] Your Majesty, [words indistinct] interview this weekend that you believe that [words indistinct] peace. Does this mean that a peace treaty [words indistinct] signed between Syria and Israel and Lebanon and Israel...

[Husayn, interrupting] I certainly hope that this will happen. I think there is indication of movement in that direction. I think very important steps are taking place. I think there are two camps. There is a peace camp that we can see and I think that it represents the hopes of the majority of people in the entire region. There are the skeptics who may be still living in the past or living in today in terms of not seeing that if this chance and opportunity is missed, the result is total disaster in the entire region.

I came to assume my constitutional responsibilities, based on the Hegira calender. In another few days, on the 17th of Sha'ban, I will be 60. What interests do I have? I have only the same interests that I have had in all the years that have passed, to do something for, to leave something for people to enjoy the kind of life that has been denied them, to know that they can wake up tomorrow, and know what hopefully it will bring, not to live in uncertainty, in tension, to have the opportunity to divert energies and resources towards what is worthwhile, building their future in the entire region. If we can achieve it, we will certainly do our very best. The timeframe, I think the way things are moving, in fact, so many surprises, most of them are pleasant in the recent past, hopefully, it may be the end of this year. It may be next year, but we are moving, determinedly, and I hope that it will be a comprehensive peace. As far as Jordan and Israel are concerned, we are dealing with our own problems right now. We still have a long way to go. We think that the other tracks will move, and I hope, eventually, we will be together.

[Reporter] I have a question for you on Iraq. Did you discuss the situation in Iraq with the Clinton Administration? And have you seen any change in the Clinton Administration's position towards Iraq and the embargo?

[Husayn] I haven't discussed it in any substantive way. I have always said that I hope that this nightmare will come to an end, sometime very soon, and particularly as it impacts on the Iraqi people, and their continued suffering under the prevailing conditions. Somehow, I hope we will get out of the area of Iraq not being an active, constructive part of the Arab world and the community of nations, as soon as possible.

[Reporter] Your Majesty, you met with a group of Jewish leaders this week. And it was very successful meeting. I heard you talk about a warm peace. Could you tell us what a warm peace would look like between Jordan and Israel, and what a warm peace in your view would look like in the region?

[Husayn] I didn't use the expression warm peace. I think, maybe, the description of the meeting was that what I implied. A warm peace may not be a very pleasant one. [laughter by reporters] But, I talked of peace, a real peace, the peace that gives everybody the opportunity to work together, and to achieve their hopes for the future. And I spoke in detail about some of the problems that we are to address: A) the problem of occupied territories. And I am talking about Jordanian occupied territories, without prejudice to what our Palestinian brothers are talking about right now. And I have stated categorically that in that regard, we feel very, very strongly that these areas, the small problem in the north of the Jordan Valley, but there is a considerable area in the southern Jordan Valley that needs to be looked at in the sense of the urgency of our demand that Jordanian territory be returned to us. So, there is the suggestion, and hopefully movement on creating a group that will look at delineation and demarcation of these borders.

And my hope is that the coming days will see some progress here. Then, people can move on the ground there. Once that is settled, and it has to mean the return of Jordanian territory to Jordanian sovereignty, then we can look at the entire rift valley and look at what can be done in the context of looking at it as a complete economic unit in terms of resources, in terms of all the potential that there is to develop to the best way possible to the benefit of all. So, the question of borders, and territories, and sovereignty over our territories is one of the aspects that has to be addressed. Another area is water. And there again, I believe that all the available resources might not be adequate for the needs of all concerned in the future. But certainly, we have got to work out the distribution of these waters in a satisfactory way, in terms of the percentages that are peoples' right. Beyond that, hopefully, in a context of peace, we can look at what can be done beyond that to secure needed water for all concerned. And obviously the third dimension—and this is not all, because I have many other items on the agenda—is the human dimension. There has to be a qualitative change of life. I would hope that the priority will be given to people in the occupied territories, but, beyond that, the region, for everybody to feel what peace is, to know what peace is, to realize what transformation there is as we progress along to its (?end).

[Reporter] Your Majesty, for many years, you have fears in Jordan that the Israelis would do something that would lead to another massive influx of Palestinian refugees from the territories. Are you worried about that happening under Palestinian control in the territories for one reason or another, either civil war or economic breakdown? And have you done anything to....?

[Husayn, interrupting, laughing] [words indistinct] have you woken up on the wrong side of bed this morning [laughing] [words indistinct] excuse my being so personal. But, let's look at the positive side, let's not talk about disasters, and things that I hope will not....

[Reporter, interrupting] Your Majesty, Jordan has survived for many years because you anticipated [words indistinct] disasters. [words indistinct].

[Husayn, interrupting] I don't anticipate hopefully any more. I am really optimistic; and that is my tendency. Of course, one can never be absolutely certain that things would work the way we wish. But, I think that there is a general consensus amongst the overwhelming majority of people that we move towards resolving problems. I hope Palestinians on their soil will enjoy democracy, pluralism, respect for human rights, and the chance to live and work with us. And I hope that Jordan and Palestine eventually can be an example to others in the entire region.

[Reporter] Your Majesty, your expressed your hope for a comprehensive peace among all parties [words indistict] work together. But can you foresee circumstances under which Jordan would sign a peace treaty with Israel moving ahead of Syria and Lebanon?

[Husayn] I would certainly hope that it will be a comprehensive peace. I believe that we are working towards that end. We are coordinating with our Syrian brethren; we are coordinating with our Lebanese brethren; we are coordinating with our Palestinian brethren; we are coordinating with Egypt to the best of our abilities. There are many subjects that are being discussed. But, we slowed down until our Palestinian brethren made their move. It was very, very important to see the Palestinian dimension, the root cause of the bigger problem in the region and the world, was addressed. They've assumed the responsibilities as they wished since 1974, and we've recognized that was the way things should move and then that made their move. Now, we are trying to help them; we are trying to resolve our own problems. I believe that there are enough subjects that must be covered before we arrive at ratifying a peace treaty. My own impression is that the time element will bring everything together almost at the same time. So, that's how we are moving. We are not trying to have a race, we're trying to address problems so that we resolve them once and for all, so that people can enjoy peace in the region. We're not ... [pauses] We're masters of our own destiny; we're working in regard to our own sphere. We're trying to see at the same time that we encourage movement on all other tracks. And I believe that problems elsewhere are probably less than they are as they affect us, because Jordan has borne the brunt of every disaster that has occurred over the years and the heaviest of weights. So, we have a long way to go, but I hope, with good will on either side—Israeli and Jordanian—we'll see rapid progress [words indistinct].

[Reporter] [word indistinct] Your Majesty, you've spoken optimistically about peace. Could you give us a more specific timetable of when Jordan and Israel could reach a peace agreement. Are we talking about months, are we talking about by the end of 1994?

[Husayn] I can't, sir. How can I give you a timetable. It does not depend on me, it depends also on the Israeli side. And I hope that, at least, as far as we are concerned right now, the Israeli partners in the negotiations will realize that instead of spending too much time on looking at how we can sign a piece of paper, and call it a peace treaty, and then negotiate it, let us get to negotiations. I believe that this is happening, and therefore, I hope that it won't take long before we discuss all the problems that need to be resolved, and then the peace treaty will come. We are committed to signing it and ratifying it when it is and when it will be the crowning achievement of resolving all the problems between us.

[Reporter] Your Majesty, in your opinion sir, did the statements made by President al-Asad at the summit represent a change or advance in Syria's position, or were they a restatement of Syria's traditional formula?

[Husayn] I don't believe they are merely a restatement of previous positions. I believe that they were statements that were welcomed by all. And I believe that there is a general consensus amongst all who know President al-Asad that he is a man of his word. I believe he went further than he went at anytime, and he is talking about comprehensive peace, in the term of obviously addressing of Syrian demands regarding Syria's territory and rights. So, I think that we are much more ahead of what we were, and we are very serious about it, too.

[Reporter] Your Majesty, if I can ask you another question about Jerusalem, I know that Jordan would like to attain Hashemite control over Jerusalem. Has Jerusalem and the future of Jerusalem entered into any of the talks you've been involved with Palestinians or with the Israelis? Could you enlighten me on what Jordan would like to see as far as Jerusalem is concerned?

[Husayn] Sir, if we are talking about Security Council Resolution 242 being the foundation of the ongoing process right now, then obviously, as far as the Palestinian-Israeli dimension of the problem, Jerusalem, in some form of way, must become the essence of peace and the symbol of the meeting between the two people in the future. [Resolution] 242 takes care of that, and the negotiations, I am sure, will deal with this problem and address it adequately. As far as the holy places are concerned, of the three great monotheistic religions, the three Abrahamic religions, we are assuming our responsibilities and we are proud to continue to do whatever we can regarding what has been left to us to look after since 1974 by the Arab summit. But, there is an idea that we've been trying to put across, and that is the need to consider, maybe for the first time in our history within the region, the possibility through something that is happening, and we have encouraged and been involved in for some period of time, interfaith dialogue, between the three great religions. But beyond that, possibly the sovereignty over all these holy places and the fact that in our view, we believe that we will not recognize any sovereignty over them except to God. I hope that, somehow in the context of peace, this problem can be addressed and maybe the followers of the three great religions can come to realize what the significance of Jerusalem is to all of them and move it outside the political equation, move the holy places outside that particular dimension. We refer to the Hashemites and their responsibilities who continue to shoulder them, we hope, and we are suggesting that a non- political Islamic representation can be found that would assume our responsibilities, or that we would support, representing all the different schools in the Islamic world, responsible, so that the Islamic holy places revert to Islamic sovereignty, in other words, or represent that. And hopefully a dialogue, eventually set between the three great religions will produce some situation in Jerusalem that will make us all meet there in worship of the one God. And I think that the area has had such an impact on the world in the past in terms of the spiritual dimension. I don't know if it might be too ambitious to think of, or consider, the possibility of realizing, all of us, that it wasn't God's will that that small area within that sacred city, important to all of us, by His will, should be the subject of wars and conflicts, but the means for all believers to come together and to enjoy those holy places.

[Reporter] When you talk about a small area, what area are you talking about, is that the old city or what?

[Husayn] I am talking about Jerusalem in terms of 242. That is something the Israelis and the Palestinians should resolve. I hope the holy places will find something that will make them important to all of us, and that sovereignty over them will be recognized by all and all, to be that of the Almighty God.

[Reporter] Talking about Jerusalem, Your Majesty, you said before that the only sovereignty over Jerusalem is to God. [reporter switches to Arabic] But the Palestinians say that Jerusalem should return to the Palestinian sovereignty. What is your majesty's opinion?

[Husayn, in Arabic] Concerning Jerusalem, we have spoken about 242 and the city, and we said that Jerusalem must be the symbol of peace between the Palestinians and Israelis as long as we are talking about the Palestinian entity which will be established, or on its way to be established. Regarding the holy places, we believe in the need to continue dialogue among religions. However, we do not consider any sovereignty over these places except that of Almighty God. We appeal to the Islamic world and we work to have a group representing all different schools which we will support as much as we can in order to achieve what we aspire for in terms of giving Jerusalem its spiritual dimension. This city is in our hearts and consciences, and so we must save it from this whirlpool concerning claiming it by this or that party, whether in the Arab world or elsewhere. Consequently, our Islamic holy places will return to us and will be safeguarded for the entire Islamic world. We believe that this is the most appropriate and the best. We hope that all sides will, through dialogue, reach a situation

which puts Jerusalem in the position which Almighty God wanted for all of us; namely, the followers of the three Abrahamic religions.

Thank you very very much indeed. [preceding sentence in English]

Minister Denies Tourist Activities With Israel

JN2701124194 Amman AL-ASWAQ in Arabic 27 Jan 94 p 5

[Report by Nabil Ghishan]

[Excerpts] The government's food and medicine policy was the main topic of the hot debate that took place at the House of Representatives during yesterday's session. Following a lengthy discussion, the House decided to devote its session on Wednesday to the government's food and medicine policy. [passage omitted]

Answering a question by Deputy Bassam al-'Umush, Tourism and Antiquities Minister Dr. Muhammad 'Affash al-'Adwan denied what was reported by some newspapers that there are tourist activities between Jordan and Israel in the Petra area and that companies are arranging such matters. The minister said: These allegations are baseless. He said that there are no contacts at all with the Israelis in this regard and no companies are arranging for this.

Deputy Bassam al-'Umush announced that he was not convinced with the minister's response, particularly in light of the visit of 83 rabbis, who desecrated the land of mobilization and steadfastness and the soil of Jordan when they walked on the streets of al-'Aqabah, Amman, and Petra. Al-'Umush added: They were about to meet with a senior official, but they were kind enough to excuse him because he was very busy. Deputy al-'Umush said that some Jewish rabbis took part in the recent Islamic-Christian dialogue held in Amman. [passage omitted]

Deputy al-'Umush said: We still hear every now and then about the calls on the private sector to make investments, particularly in Petra, because tourists are coming now secretly with U.S. passports. He added: Tourists will come openly in the future, particularly since the Jews are using the name Petra to propagate tourism in the region through world media which are under their control. We cannot accept the excuse that we receive foreigners because they carry foreign passports. A Jew, he said, remains a Jew regardless of his citizenship. [passage omitted]

[Amman JORDAN TIMES in English carried in its 27-28 January issue a 100-word front-page REUTER report which says that "Jordanian deputies condemned 83 Jewish rabbis for visiting the Kingdom." A statement, signed by 29 members of the House of Representatives, says: "We, like our people, were shocked by the rabbis' visit because it is something that was previously not allowed and they want to make it become something normal."]

Royal Air Force Chief Dies of Heart Attack

JN2801075994 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 28 Jan 94 p 1

[Excerpt] Amman-PETRA—Dr. Ma'n Abu-Nuwar, acting prime minister and defense minister has announced the death of Staff Major General Pilot 'Awni Bilal al-Hajj Qasim, chief of staff of the Royal Air Force, who passed away abroad yesterday following a heart attack while carrying out his duties. [passage omitted]

Paper Supports King's Conditions for Signing Treaty

JN2701115294 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 27 Jan 94 pp 1, 20

[Editorial: "We Are Proud of the Early Call for Peace"]

[Text] At the invitation of the U.S. Council on Foreign Relations, and before prominent personalities interested in international affairs, His Majesty King Husayn has expressed pride in having had the privilege to preach peace in the Middle East, a region that has been a beacon, and that has contributed much to the progress of mankind throughout its history on many levels.

Jordan, since 1967, has been trying by all means to achieve progress toward a peace that will satisfy future generations. This has been going on since the issuance of UN Security Council Resolution 242, passing through all the international initiatives that followed and ending with the Madrid conference from which the current peace process emanated. In this state of mind, we viewed the historic handshake and reconciliation which took place on 13 September 1993 as an act of great wisdom and great courage on both sides. In the same state of mind, Jordan has supported the progress that was made on the Palestinian-Israeli track, and ratified the agenda with Israel the next day [14 September].

Today, as at any time in the past, Jordan believes in the need to achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East, and hopes for similar progress on all the other Arab-Israeli tracks in order to achieve the ultimate goal: namely, the signing of a peace treaty with Israel, which should reflect on the lives of people on both sides. Before signing such a treaty, Jordanian territory must first return to Jordanian sovereignty. Jordan must restore its share of water, and great attention must be given to the people in the occupied territories in a way that will enable them to see an immediate change in the quality of their lives. Above all, a solution must be found to the refugee problem, which has affected Jordan more than any other neighboring Arab state.

While reviewing Jordan's position on various regional and international issues, King Husayn expressed great pride in his one family, and in democracy and all that it has entrenched in terms of freedom, power-sharing, pluralism, and respect for human rights. His majesty also expressed great optimism over the future of this region which is still heading toward a new Middle East abounding with peace prospects, development, prosperity, and hopes of harmony, cooperation, openness, and mutual respect among the followers of the three monotheistic religions.

Beirut Not To Sign Peace Treaty Before Syria

PM2701152894 London AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI in Arabic 27 Jan 94 p 4

[Unattributed report: "AL-Hariri: 'Arafat Has To Submit Application To Visit Lebanon; Lebanon, Syria Are Agreed on Signing Together With Jordan"]

[Excerpts] London, AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI—At a news conference which he held at the foreign correspondents association in London the night before last, Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri said that Lebanon would not sign a separate agreement with Israel before Syria.

Al-Hariri, who began an official visit to Britain on Monday, during which he met with Prime Minister John Major and Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd, said that Syria and Lebanon are agreed on signing together with Jordan a peace agreement with Israel.

Al-Hariri said it is early to talk about a meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin before reaching an agreement on a full Israeli withdrawal from Lebanese territory and before a halt to the shelling of civilians in southern areas. The Lebanese prime minister described the matter as not personal.

Asked about the possibility of Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat visiting Lebanon, al-Hariri said that "'Arafat has to submit an application for the visit, and we will consider it." Asked whether the visits Ahmad Jibril, secretary general of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine—General Command, makes to his forces' positions in southern Beirut are conducted with permission from the Lebanese state, al-Hariri said that "he has not looked at Ahmad Jibril's passport."

Al-Hariri renewed his rejection of [Palestinian] settlement. He was answering a question about whether he was being subjected to international pressures to settle the Palestinians, especially as Lebanese officials always talk about his rejection. Al-Hariri said that "it is Lebanon which is raising this question, because the Constitution does not allow that, nor does the present government. Our position on settlement is attributable to its adverse effect on the demographic situation in Lebanon, and hence on the political situation."

Al-Hariri pointed out that the Gaza-Jericho agreement did not talk about the future of 300,000 Palestinian refugees living in Lebanon.

On the al-Ta'if accord, al-Hariri said that "any constitution or agreement can be developed. I emphasized that in my speech at the Chamber of Deputies. I stressed that this change and development must be based on common coexistence, balance, and political participation."

On the extent of Lebanon's willingness to request the Syrian forces' withdrawal from its territory if Israel agrees to withdraw, al-Hariri said: "We will study this question at the right time and in the light of new developments. The Syrian Army is playing a positive role in safeguarding security and restoring stability in most parts of Lebanese territory." [passage omitted]

On the Gaza-Jericho agreement, the Lebanese prime minister said that the fate of this agreement is to be decided by the Palestinians and their institutions.

The Lebanese official is expected to leave London for Beirut tomorrow.

Al-Hariri on Domestic, International Policies

PM2801104494 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 27 Jan 94 pp1, 4

[Tariq Tarshishi report: "Al-Hariri in Frank Dialogue With AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT Editorial Board: Naturalization File Has Not Been Closed; Administrative Purge Is an Ongoing Process"]

[Text] London—Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri has emphasized that Lebanon is not considering building an army that wages war but is considering strengthening the Army and the Internal Security Forces to enable them to "maintain general order" in the country.

Al-Hariri was on a visit to the Arab Press House and was joined there by Lebanese journalists working for AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT, AL-MAJALLAH, and SAYYIDATI.

As the guest of the [Arab Press] House, he met there with AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT Chief Editor 'Uthman al-'Umayr, AL-MAJALLAH Chief Editor 'Abd-al-Rahman al-Rashid, SAYYIDATI Chief Editor Matar al-Ahmadi, and the company's General Manager Yasir al-Dubbagh. They then moved to the conference table where Prime Minister al-Hariri discussed details of Lebanon's internal and external situations.

Al-Hariri said: Lebanon is a friend of all the Arab states including those who supported it and those who did not, but there can be no doubt that the position of some states is distinguishable from other Arab states in that they fulfilled their commitments and were clearer in what they said. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia under the leadership of Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz spares no effort in supporting Lebanon and its causes and has fully honored its commitments, and so have Kuwait and Syria, which sent assistance at the time of the Israeli attempt to hit southern Lebanon.

Al-Hariri expressed the view that the aim of the Israeli aggressions against Lebanon last July was to show that Israel would never allow any reconstruction in Lebanon and would not allow the government to begin the reconstruction process unless it concludes a peace agreement with Israel, but in practical terms the aggression achieved none of its objectives. He added: "True, it caused death and destruction but it achieved no political results because the people who had left their cities and

villages in the south for a week have returned, thanks to the aid we received and the measures taken by the Lebanese state. There was one big united national workshop."

Asked if there is a chance that the company which undertook the reconstruction of the commercial center in Beirut (Solidaire) could operate nationwide in Lebanon after its success in Beirut, he replied: The law creating Solidaire was introduced for all Lebanon not just Beirut. It is a general law for the entire country and therefore there is nothing to prevent its being applied to other parts of Beirut and its suburbs and also to Jabal Lubnan and Tripoli but, as a government, we wanted to give the experiment in central Beirut its full range until it becomes a proven ssuccess, and it has been successful so far. The public want to see the achievements on the ground. I expect work to begin next summer opening the way for discussion of the possibility of implementing the Solidaire experiment in other areas.

Asked about the Lebanese currency improvement and whether that was based on confidence in the person of Prime Minister al-Hariri or other internal factors supporting the Lebanese pound, he replied: "It is difficult to pass judgment by saying that the matter was linked to the prime minister or to objective reasons because the currency issue has to do with confidence in the country. I should not be talking about this because it would be like someone talking about himself."

Did he sense in his talks with the British officials that European confidence in Lebanon has returned? He replied: "Actually, I rarely visit Britain but the impression I had before making this visit, which I was invited to make, was that British officials were interested in the Lebanese situation but what surprised me was the magnitude of that interest in Lebanon and their willingness to contribute. They seemed to me to be very serious and that, I believe, will have an effect on us. Britain is a large state and such interest on its part in Lebanon reflects Lebanon's worth."

He revealed that Lebanon received two offers from two major British companies to contribute to the work on and financing of Lebanon's electricity network restructuring.

He said that Britain is willing to help in the armament of the Lebanese Army and Internal Security Forces. He said: "We are talking not about building an army that wages war but about strengthening the Army and the Internal Security Forces so that they can discharge their security duties of maintaining general order."

Touching on domestic issues, al-Hariri said that the naturalization file has not been closed and is not linked to the question of Palestinian resettlement. He emphasized that the Lebanese citizenship law needs amending and that the government is serious about introducing the necessary amendments to enable the resolution of urgent cases. On the administrative purge, he said that that is an ongoing process that did not end with the dismissal of some employees.

Prime Minister al-Hariri reaffirmed Lebanon's rejection of Palestinian resettlement on its territory and spoke of the negative effects that would have on the demographic, political, economic, and social fabric of the country. He pointed out that there is a provision in the Lebanese Constitution prohibiting resettlement in any form. He stressed that no such project can be imposed on Lebanon and nobody would sign anything of that kind under pressure or otherwise. He said that he has many ideas for the solution of the problem of the Palestinians in Lebanon and is ready to discuss them with any interested party.

In reply to a question about calls for the amendment of the Lebanese Constitution introduced under the al-Ta'if agreement, he said that his position is that he is in favor of developing the al-Ta'if formula and constitution for the better, not turning back the clock. He said that "nobody can stand in the way or reject development." He recalled what he recently said in the House of Deputies to the effect that he is in favor of a forward development of the al-Ta'if formula on the basis of coexistence, balance, and participation.

Al-Hariri will leave London today for Beirut via Istanbul where he will stop over at the airport for talks with his Turkish counterpart Tansu Ciller which, according to sources close to al-Hariri, will focus on development and reconstruction issues he raised during his recent visit to Turkey a month ago.

The same sources say that he might also visit al-Qaradihah to attend the ceremony marking the passage of one week since the death of President Hafiz al-Asad's son Major Basil al-Asad.

Al-Hariri Returns to Beirut

NC2801063594 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 28 Jan 94

[Excerpt] Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri returned to Beirut last night at the end of a visit to London. [passage omitted]

Roundup of 27-28 Jan Military Actions in South

Israelis Release 4; 2 Swedish Troops Wounded

NC2701172794 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1630 GMT 27 Jan 94

[Text] The eastern quarters of Kafr Tibnit and al-Nabatiyah al- Fawqah came under 12.7-mm machinegun fire from the Israeli forces in Tallat 'Ali al-Tahir this morning.

The Israeli occupation forces today released three Lebanese and a Palestinian through the Red Cross. The Israeli Navy had seized them inside Lebanon's territorial waters.

The occupation forces also fired 16 shells, eight tank shells, and six mortars on Wadi Yatir. Helicopters fired more than 1,000 bullets at three fishermen, who were injured.

The UN Interim Force in Lebanon [UNIFIL] spokesman in the south has reported that two Swedish soldiers were wounded when a mine exploded in the al-Khiyam area. The leg of one soldier was amputated. An investigation into the incident has already started.

Further on Wounding of Swedes

NC2701204594 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 2015 GMT 27 Jan 94

[Text] Timor Goksel, official spokesman of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon, has announced that a preliminary investigation into the detonation of a land mine in the al-Kihyam area shows that while members of the Swedish contingent were carrying out maneuvers in a mine field, one of the soldiers made an error that triggered a mine explosion and injured three soldiers.

Goksel said that one of the wounded soldiers suffered grave injuries and was transferred to Haifa's Ramban Hospital. The other two were only slightly wounded, he said.

Amal Attacks Israeli Position

NC2801071294 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0615 GMT 28 Jan 94

[Text] An Amal Movement group used machine guns, rockets, and mortars to attack an Israeli position on Tallat al-Suwayda' shortly before midnight. The Movement's operations room said that fierce clashes ensued between the two sides for 20 minutes, adding that the attackers scored direct hits on the position.

The Movement said the Israeli forces bombarded the approaches to Habbush and 'Arab Salim as well as (Jisr al-Sitt Zubaydah).

SLA Post Bombarded

NC2801083094 Kafr Killa Voice of the South in Arabic 0800 GMT 28 Jan 94

[Text] According to our military correspondent, the periphery of a South Lebanese Army [SLA] position in Rshaf came under bombardment from terrorist positions in Kafra at 0210 today. The correspondent said SLA artillery silenced the sources of fire. There were no casualties among the SLA personnel, our correspondent added.

Army Patrols Sidon Area After 2 Bombs Wreck Cars

NC2801062694 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0415 GMT 28 Jan 94

[Text] Two explosions occurred last night in al-Hilaliyah at the south entrance to Sidon. The explosions caused material damage and two cars were burnt out. The first explosion was in a Range Rover belonging to Husayn Hashishu and the second in a Mercedes 230 belonging to Muhammad Nimr Qasim. Immediately after the explosions, Army units cordoned off the area, patrolling the site and the city of Sidon on foot and in vehicles.

Afghanistan

Rabbani Forces Claim Victories; Fighting Spreads

BK2701101794 Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English 27 Jan 94 pp 1, 10

[Text] Peshawar, Jan 26—As the fighting between rival Afghan factions continued for 26th day in Kabul it spread to all the northern provinces under the control of Militia Commander Gen Rashid Dostam with the claims of President Rabbani's forces to have scored victories against both the former Jonbesh-e Melli [National Movement] and Hezb-e Eslami [Islamic Party of Afghanistan] of Hekmatyar.

The President Rabbani's sources quoting the General Committee member of HIA (H) [Hezb-e Eslami Afghanistan, Hekmatyar Faction], Ubaidollah Serat said that the latter along with other 15 central leaders of HIA (H) and announced their dissociation from the fighting terming an alliance with communist Rashid Dostam as unholy one. Those they claimed dissociated from the fighting also included Deputy chief of HIA (H), Qazi Amin Waqad, central leaders Munshi Majid, Hussain Deljo, Qazi Najiullah and Prof Zara.

They also claimed that they had destroyed seven MIG planes of Rashid Dostam, Wednesday [26 January] took over more three posts from him in the north-east of Kabul city while 15 personnel fleeing from the latter's command were arrested by Maulavi Saddiqullah of Harekat-e Eslami [Islamic Movement]. They, however, said that rockets were continued to be fired at Kabul city throughout the day while in Baghlan Province the Commander of 54-Brigade of Rashid Dostam, namely Mohammad Ullah Nagar Joined Shora Nazar of Ahmad Shah Mas'ud, besides 500 personnel of HIA (H) led by commanders Abdol Ali, Jalal and Mirza Rahim also joined Mas'ud forces along with their weapons.

In Paryab province they said to have captured a huge quantity of heavy weapons from Rashid Dostam's forces.

On the other hand the HIA (H) has termed the visit of Najibollah Lafraie to Islamic Republic of Iran as very personal and should not be therefore, considered as a minister of state of Afghanistan. "Mr. Lafraie cannot speak on behalf of the government or state of Afghanistan nor he was empowered to sign any contract or memorandum or agreement on behalf of the government of Afghanistan".

They further alleged that an amount equal to 70 million dollars in different currencies was looted by the government forces when they captured Sraj Shahznda from HIA (H) and Jonbesh-e Melli forces. However, the commission appointed by President Rabbani headed by Gen Fahcem said in Kabul that according to its report the money changers had withdrawn their amount before they repulsed the attacks of HIA (H) and Jumbashi Milli.

Meanwhile, the Council for Understanding and National Unity of Afghanistan (comprising renowned commanders, tribal elders and noted religious scholars) have welcomed the UN Security Council's statement calling for an immediate cessation of hostilities.

In the open letter to the UN Secretary General, the Council noted with concern that for more than three weeks bloody battle was raging in the around Kabul where hundreds of innocent men, women and children were being killed mercilessly every day and forcing more than one hundred thousand defenceless Afghans to flee Kabul city in the severe winter.

The Council noted with regret that the UN Security Council's statement fell short of calling for an immediate cessation of foreign interference which was the root cause of the ongoing human tragedy in Afghanistan for in fact, intense and continuing foreign involvement in Afghan affairs by friendly and unfriendly powers as well as a myriad of well-financed fundamentalist organisations has precluded Afghans from finding their own solution.

They firmly believed that a Loya Jirga [Afghan Assembly] would have national legitimacy representing a broad spectrum of Afghan society lending to a broad-based political structure acceptable to the Afghan people. The letter said the Loya Jirga being a built-in mechanism in the traditional Afghan society has deep roots in the Afghan culture and it is an effective time honoured instrument for conflict resolution. The Council informed that it would not approve of the recent Pakistan's proposal for convening a regional conference on Afghanistan if it does not aim at calling for the UN involvement to promote a political settlement to the Afghan conflict. For the Afghans, the letter said have had highly disastrous results from all foreign brokered and sponsored accords namely the Peshawar Accord of April 24, 1992, the Islamabad Accord of March 7 1993, and the Jalalabad Accord of May 25, 1993, aimed at installing a fundamentalist dominated government in Kabul.

Bangladesh

Attorney General Reportedly Removed From Post

BK2301154894 Hong Kong AFP in English 0651 GMT 23 Jan 94

[By Nadeem Qadir]

[Text] Dhaka, Jan 23 (AFP)—The attorney general who successfully prosecuted and sent to jail former Bangladesh president Hussain Mohammad Ershad has been removed, although he says he was not informed of the government's decision.

Lawyers also invariably described Aminul Haq's removal as "surprising," although he is known not to be a supporter of the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP).

The official BSS news agency announced late Saturday [22 January] that "the government has appointed Additional Attorney General Abdul Wadud Khandakar as attorney general of Bangladesh in addition to his own duties, until further order."

Khandakar is known for his close links to the BNP.

The appointment, BSS said, was effective January 2 and had been approved by Bangladesh President Abdur Rahman Biswas as Haq was under medical treatment abroad.

But Haq said Sunday he had returned home last Monday and had met Biswas on Friday, yet was not informed of his removal and had continued to work as attorney general the last few days.

"I have not yet received any official letter and was surprised to hear the government announcement," he told AFP by telephone.

A top justice official confirmed the firing. "Yes, he (Haq) has been relieved of his responsibilities and papers are being processed to enable Khandakar to take full charge," the official said.

After hearing of his removal Haq said he was not going to the office Sunday, a normal working day in predominantly Muslim Bangladesh.

The ministry official refused to comment as to why Haq had not been informed.

Haq came to the limelight after successfully sending the deposed Ershad to jail for 20 years on weapons and graft charges, and was appointed attorney general by acting president Shahabuddin Ahmed's interim government in 1991.

One opposition member of parliament was quoted as saying that "he (Haq) did not join the government politically, but served his position well."

Khandakar told the daily MORNING SUN newspaper that he had received the order and had assumed the post of attorney general.

"The gentleman (Haq) was not in the country and in (his) absence an attorney general cannot handover charges to anyone," Khandakar said. "That is why it has been given retrospective effect, otherwise there would be a constitutional problem."

He said the president appoints the attorney general under a constitutional provision as recommended by the prime minister.

The former attorney general had offered to resign soon after Prime Minister Khaleda Zia came to power in March, 1991, but he was asked to carry on. He again offered to resign in April, 1992, when the government charged 24 main organisers of a "peoples' court" for treason.

The mock "peoples' court" condemned Golam Azam, chief of the Moslem fundamentalist Jamaat-e-Islami party, to "death" for crimes allegedly committed during Bangladesh's 1971 independence war, but the government said the peoples' court action was not legal.

Haq, besides pursuing several more graft charges against Ershad, was also entangled in the citizenship case of Azam. A High Court bench last year restored Azam's citizenship, but Huq had appealed against it.

The former attorney general was reluctant to say much about his removal and replacement by a man who apparently enjoys closer political ties to the government.

Asked his feelings on the government decision, Haq replied: "I have no feelings."

Report Termed 'Totally Untrue'

BK2301155294 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in English 1530 GMT 23 Jan 94

[Text] The government has described as totally untrue a report published in a section of the press that Attorney General Aminul Haq has been relieved of his responsibilities. Clarifying the position, an official press release issued in Dhaka today said as a routine matter, Additional Attorney General Abdul Wadud Khandakar has been given additional responsibility of Attorney General in the absense of incumbent Aminual Haq who had gone abroad for treatment. The press release said Mr. Aminul Haq informed the Law Ministry today of his return home on completion of treatment.

Involvement in Anti-India Activities Denied

BK2501121194 Dhaka DAINIK INQILAB in Bengali 18 Jan 94 p 5

[Editorial: "False Propaganda—Indian Style"]

[Text] The Bangladesh Rifles [border security force of Bangladesh] has termed as totally false, malicious, and calculated the report published in a section of the Indian press saying that a Pakistani intelligence agency is operating its bases in Bangladesh with the consent of the Bangladesh authorities with a view to carrying out subversive activities in India. Commenting on this propaganda made by the Indian media, a spokesman of the Bangladesh Rifles said that there are three objectives behind publishing this report. These include 1) confusing the Indian citizens, 2) diverting the attention of the international community from the fact that India is providing assistance to the Chakma rebels of Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh and 3) obstructing the development of friendly ties between India and her neighbors.

Except for Pakistan, all the other countries of the subcontinent are very weak in comparison to India. It is superior to these countries from all points of view including wealth, manpower, army, and weaponry. Almost every country of this subcontinent is aware of the superiority of India. Hence, the question does not arise

that they will make any move to challenge India. These countries do not even dare to think of making any such a venture. Each of these countries wants to preserve its independence, sovereignty, national identity, history, and cultural traditions. For this reason, the fundamental principle of the foreign policy of Bangladesh is "friendship with all and malice toward none." Since its independence, Bangladesh has abided by this policy. However, it has not been possible for Bangladesh to live in peace despite its sincere desire. Its immensely powerful neighbor, India, is continuing with its repression against Bangladesh and subjecting it to various injustices. India's aggressive designs have created tension along the border of Bangladesh. With a view to disintegrating this country, India is providing shelter and providing arms training to the secessionist forces of Bangladesh known as Bangobhumiwallahs. These militants often intrude into the country and carry out subversive activities. Apart from this, by unilaterally withdrawing the waters of the Ganges River, India is causing immense hardship to Bangladesh both in the dry and the rainy seasons. It has also allured and provoked the Chakma tribals living in Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh to leave the country and take refuge in sanctuaries in India. It has also imparted arms training to the Chakmas who repeatedly carry out raids in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. This has threatened peace and stability in the Chittagong Hill Tracts region for a long time. Every move made by Bangladesh to find a permanent solution to the Chakma problem has been frustrated by India through its illegal intervention. Under these circumstances, the Indian media has launched a campaign saying that Bangladesh is collaborating with the activities of a Pakistani intelligence agency in India. What can be a greater farce than this?

In fact, the rebellion, tension, disturbances, and secessionist movements in the northeastern states of India is an old problem. With the passage of time, this problem has worsened and has become more severe. It is getting out of control and threatening regional stability. This is, however, an internal affair of India. A small country like Bangladesh never had the time to ponder the problems of a neighboring country. Moreover, the question of assisting any other country against India does not arise. Despite this, a section of the Indian media has leveled such allegations against Bangladesh. This is called the Indian style of false propaganda. It is entirely fabricated and malicious. This is their habit. They do not feel ashamed to do such things. However, it is true that they will gain nothing by doing so. By digging a ditch for others, they will fall into it themselves.

Implementation of SAPTA Faces Uncertainty

BK2501153594 Dhaka DAINIK INQILAB in Bengali 17 Jan 94 p 1

[By Mobaidur Rahman]

[Text] Implementation of the South Asian Preferential Trade Arrangement [SAPTA] agreement has become uncertain due to fears that India would dominate this proposed trading alliance. It has also been learned that reduction or abolition of tariff and customs duties on certain items decided to be traded under this arrangement has not been done, although the time limit fixed for this purpose has already expired. Diplomatic sources said that Pakistan did not attend several meetings of the committee formed to finalize the structure of the SAPTA. On one such occasion, Pakistan said that it was unable to attend the meeting as it was busy with the general elections and added that the government of Prime Minister Moin Qureshi cannot make any decision on SAPTA as it is a caretaker government. After the election of Benazir Bhutto as prime minister, another meeting of the SAPTA committee was held in Sri Lanka last November. Pakistan abstained from attending this meeting also but did not give any reason for it. Diplomatic sources said that the government of Benazir Bhutto believes that if the SAPTA accord is implemented then Indian products will capture the markets of the SAARC [South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation] member countries. Apart from this, Pakistan is not interested in SAPTA, as it has found markets for its products in the West and Central Asian countries following the launching of the Economic Cooperation Organization [ECO]. For this reason, Pakistan is gradually losing its interest in SAPTA.

A Foreign Ministry source, who preferred to remain anonymous, disclosed that Pakistan was never interested in SAPTA. It has just complied with the requests made by other SAARC member countries to agree to the formation of the SAPTA. During the last SAARC summit held in Dhaka so many differences surfaced over the proposal for the launching of this trading forum that it was about to be dropped. The SAARC foreign ministers failed to reach a consensus on the issue. Later, the leaders of the SAARC countries who came to Dhaka to attend the summit managed to convince Pakistan to agree to the launching of the SAPTA during their river cruise on the Buriganga River in Dhaka.

However, after the SAARC summit, several countries, including Iran, Pakistan, Turkey, Afghanistan, and the newly emerged Muslim states of the former Soviet Union, took up large-scale programs for greater economic cooperation among them. As a result, Pakistan gradually became more inclined toward the ECO. It has been learned from a reliable source that the Iranian foreign minister during his visit to Dhaka last year invited Bangladesh to join the ECO, but it refused to accept the proposal.

It has been reported that when talks were being held in Dhaka regarding formulating the draft of the SAPTA, some of the members pointed out the economic disparity among the countries of the region. They cited that the level of economic and technological development was not the same in these countries, as the gap was very wide. Pakistan and India are at par, taking into consideration the economic growth rate and technological development in these two countries, but the level of economic

development in the other SAARC member countries including Bhutan, Nepal, Bangladesh, and Maldives is much below that of India and Pakistan. Bangladesh has nothing to trade with these two countries. Observers feel that the over-enthusiasm of Bangladesh to maintain its South Asian identity will make it totally dependent on India.

India

Minister Discusses Situation in Punjab, Kashmir

BK2701103694 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 27 Jan 94

[Text] The union home minister, Mr. S.B. Chavan, has reiterated that Rajiv Ganhi-Longowal accord [on Punjab] still holds good and will be implemented after total peace and normalcy returns to Punjab. Talking to newspersons after laying the foundation stone of a building complex at Chandigarh today, Mr. Chavan said Pakistan has launched an aggressive disinformation campaign about the alleged human rights violations in India. He pointed out that Pakistan itself is responsible for creating disturbing conditions by abetting terrorism in Punjab and some other parts of the country. Mr. Chavan stressed the need to counter this campaign by evolving a suitable strategy. Replying to a question about the future of Chandigarh, the home minister said that the prime minister is the competent authority to decide this.

Replying to a question on Jammu and Kashmir, Mr. Chavan said the government is willing to have a dialogue with the militants there on the condition that they first give up violence. But the talks should be within the framework of the Indian Constitution, he added.

Pakistan's Rejection of Peace Proposals Viewed

BK2701144994 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1430 GMT 27 Jan 94

[Text] India today denounced Pakistan for its reported rejection of New Delhi's six proposals on resolving bilateral issues. In response to a query, the External Affairs Ministry spokesman said in New Delhi today that though India has not yet received any formal response, it has the Pakistan Foreign secretary's statement in the press rejecting the proposals. He said if it is true, it is the final proof that there is no truth in Pakistan's claim that it only provides moral, diplomatic and political support to separatists and terrorists in Kashmir. He said Islamabad's refusal to discuss the proposals and the confidence-building measures gives a lie to their claim that they are not supporting terrorists on Indian soil. On the other hand, it has acknowledged that it will continue to send infiltrators and mercenaries in Kashmir to support terrorist activities.

The spokesman said if Pakistan genuinely wanted peace and dialogue, then there should be no objection to the proposals which also included a draft agreement on maintaining peace and tranquility on the Line of Control.

Pakistanis Fire Rockets Across Kashmir Border

BK2701155094 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 27 Jan 94

[Text] In Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistani troops fired six rockets toward (Degwar) village near the Line of Control this morning without any provocation. AIR [All India Radio] Punch correspondent reports that one of the unexploded rockets was picked up by a civilian which exploded injuring 14 persons, six of them seriously. The Army later launched a search operation in the area and recovered three more unexploded rockets. Punch town observed a bundh [strike] today protesting against the increasing militant activities at Pakistan's behest in the area.

U.S. Urged To Ask Islamabad To Stop Meddling

BK2701143394 Calcutta ANANDABAZAR PATRIKA in Bengali 19 Jan 94 p 4

[Editorial: "Kashmir Tangle"]

[Text] The information that Pakistan's military intelligence department, the Inter-Services Intelligence [ISI], is helping Kashmiri militants carry out terrorist and subversive activities in the state has not been provided by an Indian official in New Delhi but by the United States itself. This was stated in a report submitted recently before the U.S. House of Representatives. The report said Pakistani spies put on the uniform of Indian soldiers and indulged in subversive activities in Kashmir. After seeing this report, it will not be proper for U.S. officials to say that sufficient evidence does not exist to prove Indian allegations of Pakistani interference in Kashmir. Instead of expressing concern over the false allegations of human rights violations by Indian forces in Kashmir, Washington should ask Pakistan to stop meddling in the valley. If this is done then the peace-loving people of the state will give a sigh of relief.

Pakistani agents are not only active in Kashmir but also in other parts of India. There is hardly a place in the country where the ISI agents are not operating. According to the Home Ministry's intelligence reports, Pakistani spies were behind the explosions in Bombay and other places. They operate everywhere particularly in busy places such as streets, offices, markets, and crowded train compartments. These agents have already caused great losses to life and property. It may be true that the intelligence agency of the Indian Government, to hide their own inefficiency and failures, are shifting the blame for all mishaps onto Pakistan. But from the incidents occurring in Kashmir and other states it appears that Pakistan has a role in fomenting trouble and tension in this country. It seems very keen to encourage secessionist movements in Kashmir and in the north-eastern region of the country by aiding militancy.

There is no doubt that tension along the border of Kashmir has increased manifold. Both the activities of the militants and the provocations created by Pakistani soldiers have simultaneously increased. The situation along the border has deteriorated to such an extent that the government has been compelled to ask the armed forces to remain on alert to render any assistance needed by the Border Security Force. An improvement in the situation cannot be expected as Islamabad is repeatedly threatening war and making statements that are not conducive to peace. It is unfortunate that in Pakistan anti-India statements are made for winning elections. This is understandable. But, till now the statements of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto have not been encouraging. Benazir's position has become shaky due to stiff opposition from Nawaz Sharif on one hand and the severe family conflict on the other. But nothing serious has happened for which Benazir Bhutto should become upset or reckless. It will be good for Bhutto if she realizes this at the earliest.

It is difficult for New Delhi to give concessions to Islamabad. It has also not been possible for the Indian Government to take the necessary initiatives needed to normalize ties between the two countries. India should take steps to remove fear and mistrust from the mind of Pakistan. Surely both sides do not want another war. Not all problems can be resolved militarily. Steps are needed for a peaceful settlement of all disputes. It appears now that a political solution should be found to the Kashmir issue. The government is making efforts to bring about administrative changes in Kashmir in order to consolidate its position. But why are efforts being made to give so much importance to Dr. Farooq Abdullah [former chief minister of state] now? Is he very important politically? At present, neither him nor his party, called the National Conference, have the support of a majority of the population. No one will forget how he left the country and deserted his close associates in the time of danger. Why can't the government find a person in the state who enjoys the confidence of the people and who can help it find a political solution to the Kashmir tangle?

Serious View of Pakistani Nuclear Warning Urged

BK2801103594 Bombay NAVBHARAT TIMES in Hindi 11 Jan 94 p 4

[Editorial: "Serious Meaning of a Childish Threat"]

[Text] It would have been wrong to presume that Pakistan would sit silently after both sides agreed to disagree at the recent India-Pakistan foreign secretary-level talks. By putting conditions before the talks, Pakistan had already made its intentions clear that for the time being it is in no way interested in normalizing relations between the two countries. However, the warning given by Pakistan Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ali during his visit to Uzbekistan that a war may break out in South Asia cannot only be described as fuel to keep the controversy alive. The statement has been given under a well-planned policy which aims on the one hand to keep public opinion in Pakistan with the government, and on the other to inform the comunity of nations that if it did not keep in view the Pakistani interests, the situation may well get out of control.

As reported, the Pakistan foreign minister during his stay in Uzbekistan has drawn a blueprint of nuclear war in South Asia. He has threatened that if the Kashmir controversy is not settled in line with Pakistani interests, India and Pakistan may go to war for the fifth time and that nuclear arms may be used. The threat, perhaps, is given to underline that a desperate Pakistan can resort to anything at its disposal. It is true that in terms of international diplomacy such threats can only be described as childish, but it cannot be fully ignored in view of the the way Pakistan has been constantly hurting Indian interests. By assisting terrorists in Punjab and Kashmir, Pakistan has only shown its hostile attitude against India. Pakistan was also behind the bomb blasts in Bombay last year. Evidence has often come to light about Pakistan's encouragement of communal violence in various places in India. Hence, the Pakistan foreign minister's threat should be taken seriously, not because we should be afraid of Pakistan's so-called nuclear capability, but because of the fact that Pakistan has launched a diplomatic offensive against India. We are capable of confronting Pakistan's military might and this has been proven many times in the past. Today, however, the need is not as much about displaying our military strength as showing diplomatic skill and capability.

Our biggest need today is to clearly define our objectives and put them before the world in no uncertain terms. This is all the more imperative if the world is to view the Indian stand in the right perspective regarding Kashmir. We have to make it clear that Kashmir is an integral part of India and that we are ready to take all steps to defend our territorial integrity. We also must explain to the world how normal life has been disrupted in Kashmir due to Pakistani-sponsored terrorism. The way Pakistan is abetting terrorism is no less than any war by itself. In such a situation, India not only has to make its stand clear, but it must categorically state that its policy objectives are not surrounded by a mist of uncertainties. Our attitude should not reflect a lack of self-confidence. This is essential to project our stand to the world community. We also cannot ignore the fact that countries like the United States want to view Kashmir issues from the Pakistani viewpoint. This is why it is necessary that we become more active on the diplomatic front than in the past. While on the one hand it is essential to make it known to Pakistan that India cannot be cowed down by threats, on the other it is also essential to explain to world opinion that Pakistan's stand regarding Kashmir is not only illogical, but dangerous as well. The language of threats being used by Pakistan may well be childish, but it is also full of dangerous consequences. The Pakistan Government could resort to any adventure to strengthen its position within the country. This is why it is all the more necessary that we clearly define our stand

regarding Pakistan and avoid ad hoc policies. Vacillation will create doubt about our polices which will weaken our stand. Our aim should be clear and our sight straightforward.

Accord Reached on Repatriation of Refugees

BK2801103994 Calcutta ANANDABAZAR PATRIKA in Bengali 24 Jan 94 p 5

[Text] Agartala, January 23: The repatriation of 54,000 Chakma refugees of Chittagong Hill Tracts [CHT's] of Bangladesh, who are living in camps in the Tripura state of India for the past seven years will start 15 February. In the first phase of the repatriation process, a total of 400 refugee families will be sent back to their homes in Bangladesh. The remaining refugees will be repatriated in phases. This was decided at a meeting held between the representatives of the Bangladesh Government and the tribal refugees on January 16 in Ramgarh District of Bangladesh. The tribals agreed to go back after being assured that their preconditions would be fulfilled by the Bangladesh government.

The decision of the tribals to go back to Bangladesh was conveyed by the leader of the tribal delegation to the recently held talks, Upendra Lal Chakma, when he called on the Tripura governor, Romesh Bhandari, in Agartala today. Meanwhile, work has already started with a view to prepare the list of the 400 families to be repatriated in the first phase. It may be mentioned that these tribals started fleeing from CHT's in 1986 due to the repression launched against them and took refuge in camps located in the southern part of Tripura.

The following preconditions given by the tribal delegation were accepted by the representatives of the Bangladesh government during the meeting held on January 16: 1) the government agreed to protect the life and property of the refugees, return their lands, and ensure their proper rehabilitation; 2) representatives of the Refugee Welfare Assocation based in Tripura will be allowed to visit CHT's to see for the themselves the rehabilitation of the refugees who will be repatriated in the first phase; and 3) repatriation of the remaining refugees will depend on the progress made in the talks between the Bangladesh government and the representatives of the Parbatya Chattagram Jana Samhati Samity [Chittagong Hill Tracts People's Solidarity Council] on bringing about a political settlement of the CHT's tangle.

The Tripura governor, Romesh Bhandari, has welcomed the decision made by the tribal refugees to go back to their country. It may be mentioned that he played a important role in this regard. Bhandari became acquainted with the Chakma refugee problem during the period when he was the foreign secretary of India. He took personal initiative to expedite the repatriation of the refugees since he took over as the governor of Tripura. In this regard, he also held discussions with the central government in Delhi.

Khurshid Calls South African Visit 'Successful'

BK2701161294 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 27 Jan 94

[Text] Mozambique and Zimbabwe have responded positively to the idea of forming a trade bloc among the Indian Ocean rim states. The minister of state for external affairs, Mr. Salman Khurshid, said this in New Delhi today on his return from a visit of four countries of southern Africa. He said the African National Congress is also favorable to the proposal. He described his fortnight-long visit as successful in renewing contacts with the leadership of South Africa, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and Botswana.

Need To Boost Space Program Reliability Raised

BK2801093694 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 28 Jan 94

[Text] The chairman of the Indian Space Research Organization, ISRO, Professor U.R. Rao, stressed the need for evolving cost-effective and more reliable system for the country's space program. Opening a seminar on propulsion system in Thiruvananthapuram today, he said that the thrust should be on the total development of technology at an affordable cost. Professor Rao said the reliability rate of the country's space system is 91 to 92 percent. The immediate priority should be to raise it to the level of 95 to 96 percent, and only then, the country can claim to have a system that is considered reliable, he added.

Iran

Rowhani on Relations With Neighboring States

LD2701153294 Tehran IRNA in English 1439 GMT 27 Jan 94

[Text] Qom, Jan. 27, IRNA—Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC), Dr. Hasan Rowhani, says despite the world power's becoming unipolar by the United States, the Islamic Republic of Iran has not changed its policies.

Speaking to theologians in a mosque here Wednesday night, he said "despite all efforts launched by the U.S. to conspire against the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iran's policies formulated by the late Imam Khomeyni are successfully going ahead."

Rowhani who is the chief of Majles Foreign Policy Committee and the leader's representative at SNSC, said the United States has suffered defeat in post-Soviet era in international and regional arena and after the admission by Russia that they have failed in their plans.

He said the hard efforts of the U.S. to persuade Europe and Japan not to cooperate with Iran in economic and commercial areas have failed. He deplored the U.S. for

raising a ballyhoo on Iran's foreign debts by giving unrealistic figures which he said had failed to reach anywhere.

Answering a question on Iran's relations with the neighbouring countries, Rowhani said ties with Turkey are satisfactory. In light of national and security issues, Turkey has no other way but to maintain growing relations with Iran and "we welcome friendly relations with Ankara."

On relations with Iraq, he said if grounds are provided for Iraq in the international arena, Baghdad would be willing to consolidate ties with Tehran. However, he added, it was Iran's natural right to respond severely to the armed attempts by counterrevolutionary groups outside the borders.

On ties with the Persian Gulf littoral states, he said Iran employed logical ways is to settle its problems with these states in order to foil U.S. attempts to bring discord into the Persian Gulf.

He described Iran's relations with Pakistan as excellent and on Afghanistan, he said Iran was the only mediator in the conflict. He said the prospect of relations with Afghanistan was promising.

On the fall in oil prices, he said lower oil prices can prompt a new mechanism to cut off dependence on oil and pave the way for economic growth through non-oil exports.

Rowhani said Iran's non-oil exports reached dlrs. 5,000 million [figure as received] this year. The figure is expected to reach dlrs. [dollars] 6,000 million next year, he said.

He put emphasis on Iran's relations with Saudi Arabia and said issues including oil, presence of foreign forces in the Persian Gulf, and Hajj pilgrimage entitled Tehran to strengthen mutual relations with Riyadh.

Report on Victory-3 Maneuvers in Persian Gulf

LD2701202194 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 27 Jan 94

[Text] The fourth and final stage of the great Victory-3 maneuvers began in the blue waters of northern Persian Gulf this morning with the extensive participation of units under the joint command of the [Islamic Revolution Guards] Corps [IRGC], the Army of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and the popular forces.

In this stage of the maneuvers, initially a divers' exploration team attacked the jetties of an imaginary enemy and while destroying support vessels tied up at the docks, passed through defensive positions and mine fields.

The operating forces, in a lightning attack on military installations on the island, including radar, listening, and [word indistinct] posts, destroyed a substantial portion of the enemy's radar capacity.

In the final stage of the Victory-3 maneuvers the heavy artillery of the Guards and [military] equipment company, with their heavy, precise, and extensive fire on enemy positions, installations, and the beach jetty, prevented the vessels of the imaginary enemy from aproaching these areas.

At the same time as these operations, the joint IGRC-Army mine-layers blocked all entrances and sensitive areas with various marine mines of extremely high sensitivity. Meanwhile, the fighter-bombers of the army of the Islamic Republic of Iran, using the best tactical actions, identified attacking vessels and, coordinating with missile sites, took action to ensure their destruction.

While bombarding the positions of the imaginary enemy, the Kousar brigade warship and the Qader support vessel, supported by the heavy fire of the army's gunships, began their thunderous attacks.

The marine brigade and the commando brigade of the navy of the Guards Corps, together with the army's armored units and supported by the tanks and armored vehicles of the Guards Corps' land forces, executed a lightning attack on the island and captured the first defenses of the imaginary enemy.

Meanwhile, in order to speed up operations and to capture the island, companies of the IRGC commando brigade, landed from helicopters beyond enemy lines and carried out their tactical military operations.

Commentary on 'False Hopes' of PLO-Israeli Accord

LD2701162394 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1053 GMT 27 Jan 94

[Station commentary]

[Text] Yitzhaq Rabin, the prime minister of the Zionist regime, has announced that his regime has no intention of a military withdrawal from the Gaza-Jericho autonomous region for at least another three months. This announcement of the stance of the Zionist regime has once again contradicted Yasir 'Arafat's optimism.

'Arafat had hoped that after the Zionist regime's violation of its earlier promise to withdraw from Gaza and Jericho, he would be able to be in charge of the internal affairs of the Gaza-Jericho autonomous region within the next month and a half. Mockingly, Rabin said that one should congratulate an optimistic person such as Yasir 'Arafat.

The prime minister of the Zionist regime has indirectly admitted that there is a feeling of disappointment and despair among the Palestinians regarding the process of the compromise. However, the disappointment and despair of the Palestinians is a double-edged sword, one

side of which is turned towards 'Arafat and the other is aimed against the Zionist regime.

When 'Arafat signed the autonomy accord, he portrayed a false picture of it for the Palestinians who were under the oppression of the Zionist regime. He tried to give rise to this false hope that after decades of struggle there would be a Palestinian state, at least within the limited area of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, and that the noble Qods [Jerusalem] would be the capital of the Palestinian state. In addition to that, with the creation of a Palestinian state, the Palestinian refugees would be able to return to their land and all Palestinians prisoners would be set free.

However, now, four months after the signing of the accord and after the shattering of the veils of deception and the crushing of the weak foundations of the hope built upon 'Arafat's false promises, all that is left of the accord is despair and despondency among the Palestinians. This has led to an escalation of the Islamic intifadah of the Palestinians.

'Arafat has lost most of his popular and administrative support, as well as his political and revolutionary legitimacy, without having in practice gained anything from Israel. In the same way, Israel has lost many of its winning cards without being able to ensure the security of the occupiers and without harming the intifadah whose flames she has tried very hard to extinguish. In fact, Israel's strongest card, which has now been used and has been made worthless, is 'Arafat himself.

Now it has been made clear to the Palestinians that, contrary to the false hopes that 'Arafat had aroused, there will be no Palestinian state or government as the result of the autonomy accord. Israel, which has used the size of the Jericho region as an excuse for the nonimplementation of the accord, will never give up other occupied territories including the West Bank and noble Qods. Furthermore, Zionist settlements will remain in the autonomous regions as the military outposts of the occupying regime and as bases for ensuring the continued military and political presence of that regime. Communications between the autonomous region and the outside world will also continue to be under the control and supervision of the Zionist regime.

As regards 'Arafat's occasional statements about Jerusalem being the capital of the Palestinian state, it is sufficient to refer to Rabin's warnings and his arrogant telling off of 'Arafat during the talks in Cairo to make it clear that it has been nothing but a propaganda ploy by 'Arafat.

The fact that on the basis of the accord the return of many millions of Palestinian refugees who left the occupied territories in 1948 is out of the question, and that the return of the refugees who left in 1967 is also conditional, demonstrates that the Gaza- Jericho Accord was indeed signed against the interests of several million Palestinian refugees.

Now, there is only 'Arafat, Israel, and many dashed hopes. Israel is trying to ensure the security of the occupiers at the expense of all those dashed hopes. Consequently, she refrains from withdrawing by resorting to various excuses. However, this has further inflamed the rage of the Palestinians and has further intensified the intifadah, as a result of which the prospects for the security of the occupying regime have also become much dimmer.

The approach of the Palestinian strugglers has even encouraged the members of 'Arafat's Fatah movement to gradually separate their paths from that of 'Arafat and to turn toward the successful experiment of the Islamic intifadah.

Paper: Nation Unable To Host Afghan Refugees

NC2701152494 Paris AFP in English 1318 GMT 27 Jan 94

[Text] Tehran, Jan 27 (AFP)—The presence of two million Afghan refugees in Iran has drained the country's resources and poses a threat to its national security, an Iranian newspaper warned on Thursday.

Responding to an appeal from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees Sadako Ogata for a halt to the repatriation of refugees from Iran and Pakistan, the English-language TEHRAN TIMES said the Islamic republic was no longer able or "obliged" to host them.

"The nature of the Afghan refugee problem has changed since the liberation of the country from the former Soviet Union," it said. "The world should not expect us to treat the refugees with the same urgency when they are victims of factional infighting in their country."

The paper warned Iran's national security was "threatened" and that the country could no longer afford spending its resources on the large number of refugees there.

"Our security forces are engaged daily in clashes with Afghan drug smugglers disguised as refugees," it said. "What would Western countries do under the same circumstances?"

The Afghan capital Kabul has been hit by a new surge in fighting since January 1, which has left some 10,000 people dead or wounded and forced thousands to flee the country.

Troops loyal to President Borhanoddin Rabbani have been pitted in a fierce battle against combined forces of Uzbek-Pashtun warlord Abdol Rashid Dostam and Prime Minister Golboddin Hekmatyar.

Ogata warned on Tuesday that the civil war raging in Afghanistan could trigger a new influx of refugees into Iran and Pakistan and called for a halt in the repatriation process.

Her message was contained in a letter read out to ministers at a meeting of the 10-member Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO) in Tehran.

Ogata said she did not expect the international community to fund the repatriation process as long as fighting threatened the lives of the returnees.

She warned of the "tendency of many governments to close their borders when faced with the threat of refugee influxes," and called for borders to remain open for "people who require international protection."

With UNHCR help Iran and Pakistan have stepped up efforts to repatriate Afghan refugees who fled the 14-year civil war in Afghanistan. Iran says the refugees have been encouraged but not forced to return.

Pakistan

Commitment to Nuclear-Free South Asia Affirmed

BK2701114894 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1100 GMT 27 Jan 94

[Text] The president, Sardar Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari, has said Pakistan is firmly committed toward establishing an equitable and nondiscriminatory nonproliferation regime in South Asia. Addressing the inaugural ceremony of the National Institute for Biotechnology and Genetic Engineering in Faisalabad today, he said Pakistan's nuclear program is purely peaceful and we have no intention to develop a nuclear weapon. The president said we will welcome and cooperate on any proposal from any quarter to make South Asia a nuclear-free zone. However, Pakistan will not accept unilateral restrictions on its peaceful nuclear program on the pretext of nonproliferation.

Sardar Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari said Pakistan has acquired political stability after a long time. The government is now concentrating on promoting industrial infrastructure by advancing science and technology in the country.

Indian Home Minister's Allegations Rejected

BK2701113794 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1100 GMT 27 Jan 94

[Text] Pakistan has categorically rejected the allegations made by the Indian home minister, Mr. S.B. Chavan, of the involvement of ISI [Inter-Service Intelligence] in the insurgencies taking place in northeastern India. A Foreign Office spokesman said in Islamabad that one purpose of this smear campaign by India against Pakistan is to mask Indian repression and atrocities in occupied Jammu and Kashmir. He said the (?vehemence) and frequency of Indian allegations against Pakistan are proportionate to the degree of its internal difficulties.

Arab Nationals Involved in Afghanistan To Leave

BK2401080094 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 24 Jan 94 p 1

[Text] Islamabad—The government Sunday [23 Jan] took a very serious view and made it clear to all Arab nationals involved in the Afghan Jihad, presently living inside Pakistan, that they must leave the country by January 31, or face extradition.

Replying a point of order regarding a statement of the Egyptian diplomat about the presence of some of the Egyptian nationals in Pakistan in the National Assembly Sunday evening, Interior Minister Nasirullah Babar said, "the government has taken a final decision that all such people whether they belong to Egypt, Algeria or any other country would be extradited." He told the House that Pakistan would not allow anybody to use its soil for terrorist activities. The minister said that they (Arab nationals) can go anywhere they want after being expelled from Pakistan.

"We will not allow Pakistan to be used as a stick. We will certainly not allow Egypt to let their nationals stay here and then label us as terrorists. We will not allow this."

The attention of the govt was drawn by PKMAP's [Pukhtun Khwa Milli Awami Party] Mahmood Khan Achakzai who while speaking on a point of order, referred to an interview given by Mustafa Hanafi, Ambassador of Egypt. Achkzai informed the House that the Ambassador had disclosed that twenty Egyptians including ten murderers were residing in Pakistan. One of these, he said was, living inside Islamabad.

Interior Minister added that the government was in touch with the Embassy of Egypt in this regard. He said the Egyptian diplomats were apprehensive about their (Arab Nationals) return as they would be a nuisance to the Egyptian govt. "But we have told them clearly that they had to leave Pakistan by January 31 along with all other Arabs would be allowed to go back to Afghanistan if they so desired.

Maulana Faziur Rehman pleaded with the government that they should, instead, give assurances to the countries of these Arabs and NGOs [nongovernmental organizations] that Pakistan would control these people. He pleaded that they should not be returned to their respective countries for possible execution there. He added that these Arabs who were now being labelled as murderers were those that had come to Pakistan for the Afghan Jihad.

In the past, this very issue had been raised by the media at the Foreign Office. They were told that there had been no such complaints from the Egyptian Embassy here. However, the caretaker government had also taken up the issue and put restrictions on all Arab Non Governmental Organisations housed in Peshawar. The caretaker government had also ordered them to leave the country.

Meanwhile, as thousands of Afghans gathered at the Torkham border to enter Pakistan, the interior minister reiterated Pakistan's position on the issue.

He said Pakistan would keep its border with Afghanistan closed as there were several peaceful areas inside Afghanistan where the people of Kabul could take refuge. He once again reminded the House that the jihad was over. Turning to the continued news bulletins from the BBC which spoke about the plight of the refugees, the minister replied, "Jalalabad airport is open. Flights can operate to take these refugees to the United Kingdom if they so desire."

Delhi 'Nonpaper' Proposals Cause Disappointment

BK2701102994 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 27 Jan 94 p 1

[Text] Islamabad—The government on Wednesday [26 January] expressed disappointment over the contents of six nonpapers which New Delhi handed over on Tuesday because none of them addressed the core and fundamental problem of Occupied Kashmir.

However, the Foreign Office says it will study them very carefully with the seriousness they deserve. Other ministries would also study them and only then would a 'considered reaction' be given.

Giving his preliminary reaction Foreign Secretary Shaharyar M Khan said; "None of the six non-papers really goes into the depth of the issue. We feel that India's position is mainly to raise less important issues to show to the world that we are engaged in negotiations so that pressure by Western countries, governments and public opinion is diverted."

The Foreign Secretary said that unlike New Delhi, Pakistan, in its two non-papers, referred to the two crucial issues, i.e. steps for stopping repression in occupied Kashmir and modalities of holding plebiscite.

Giving his reactions on the six-non papers one by one Shaharyar M Khan expressed his amazement that proposal on Line of Control (LoC) virtually calls for the acceptance of the status quo on the LoC. "This is not acceptable to Pakistan. This does not refer to the question of repression (on the LoC) which is why there is tension there."

The Foreign Secretary felt that if this issue was addressed as if there was no tension at the LoC, then one would have only a 'mechanical agreement' thus missing the point altogether.

He felt that the three non-papers on Siachen, Wullar Barrage and Sir Creek show that the points on which discussions were left off during the last talks, have not been accurately reflected.

These technical issues, he said, had shown progress in the past but the non-papers on the subject do not show this.

India's non-paper on confidence-building measures has also greatly disappointed Pakistan which feels that these continue to be 'peripheral issues' while the core issue is completely by-passed.

Commenting on the 'no first strike' policy, the Foreign Secretary said that since Pakistan was not a nuclear power and since it did not possess any nuclear weapon "this was a contradiction".

This proposal, he added, asks for something that Pakistan does not possess.

In the same area, about increasing the frequency of the two DMOs' [expansion unknown] talk to each other, Mr Khan replied: "I was expecting reference to regional non-proliferation, or the banning of chemical weapons and ballistic missiles."

There is agreement on the proposal of joint commissions but the Foreign Secretary added: "It is important to discuss repression in Occupied Kashmir, and the human rights issue. These come first. Things like exchanging table tennis teams and military bands can come later. They are not our top priority."

India Accused of Dodging Kashmir Issues

BK2801111994 Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English 28 Jan 94 p 6

[Editorial: "The Nonsense Non-Papers"]

[Text] Trivialising the issue is what the Indian government seems to be interested in right now. When the secretary level talks on Kashmir started in Islamabad at the start of the new year, no one expected a breakthrough but it was generally hopes that the meeting will at least lead to a marked decrease in human rights violations and repression of the Indian armed forces against the Kashmir people living under Indian occupation. Instead, the Indian army has intensified atrocities and the ferocity and the frequency of "sieze, search and destroy" operations in the predominantly Muslim areas has increased manifold. When a delegation of the Amnesty International was in New Delhi last week, it was denied permission to visit these areas which continue to be under perpetual siege by the Indian army who do not allow even essential supplies into these areas as a collective punishment for the entire population. The method adopted by the Indian army in occupied Kashmir is more brutal and inhuman then even in Bosnia where at least there are some safe heavens. [as published] In occupied Kashmir there are no safe heavens even for women, children and the aged. The Indian army has divided the whole [word indistinct] of population in the valley into fully guarded prisoner camps and totally isolated them from the outside world. This is what the Indian leaders call "the Punjab way" of solving the

Kashmir problem. This only confirms Pakistan's suspicion that India's readiness to discuss Kashmir was nothing but a diversionary move to gain time and befool the world public opinion. If any fresh proof was needed to confirm these suspicions, the Indian foreign secretary provided it when he handed out six non-papers to Pakistan High Commissioner in New Delhi the other day. Foreign Secretary Shaharyar was trying to be polite when he described these non-papers as "disappointing."

From what has become known about these non-papers, it is clear that India has made a deliberate effort to miss the point by dodging and ducking the real issue. First, India dragged its feet as usual and delayed delivering on the promise of providing informal position papers within a fortnight. After Pakistan expressed its indignation over the delay, the Indians handed over the "non-papers" which mostly focus on non-issues or simply repeat India's previous position on technical matters involved. In some matters like Siachen, Sir Creek, Wuller Barrage, etc, the Indian non-papers do not pick up the thread from where it was left in the latest talks early this month. Instead, the position stated goes back to what was known even before the last secretary level talks. The non-papers do not reflect whatever little progress was possible in the last round. That can only mean that the Indians either do not want the next round of talks to start sooner or want to introduce as many non-issues as possible and stretch the talks to provide, their armed forces with enough time to choke and strangulate the whole population which continues under their brutal siege.

On its part, Pakistan provided India with two non-papers it had promised and suggested specific steps to improve the situation in occupied Kashmir. Pakistan had also made it clear that the next round of talks should focus on discussing the modalities for holding a plebiscite in Kashmir. The Indians, in their non-papers not only have avoided the substantive issue of Kashmir but have also made a mockery of the whole exercise by raising a wholly non-existent issue, i.e. "no first strike" using nuclear weapons. While India may have nuclear warheads, as many believe it has, Pakistan has no such weapons and hence no question of first strike capability of Pakistan can be relevent. This only shows the utter nonseriousness of the Indian leaders in solving a problem which continues to be a flashpoint in this sensitive region. As for our US friends, who have been trying to facilitate a dialogue with India on Kashmir, we would only say that the most important ingredient of a peaceful solution continues to be missing and that is political commitment of the Indian government to resolve the dispute. Should we continue to hope that the Americans will ultimately notice this glaring absence and try to convince their Indian friends that it is time to abandon pretensions and attend to solving the core issue in earnest.

Rejection of Indian Proposals Justified

BK2701122994 Rawalpindi JANG in Urdu 27 Jan 94 p 3

[Editorial: "The Six Indian Proposals Rejected"]

[Text] Indian High Commissioner S.K. Lamba met the Pakistani foreign secretary the other day and presented six proposals to lessen the existing tension between Pakistan and India. The proposals were related to matters like Siachen glacier, the Line of Control [LOC] in Kashmir, Sir Creek, delimitation of the maritime boundary, reactivation of the camps formed by the joint commission in 1988, and steps to create a parity [between the two countries] in the peaceful nuclear program. The Pakistani authorities have not yet examined the proposals in detail. However, expressing an initial reaction, the Foreign Office has said there is nothing in the Indian proposals which can boost Pakistan's hope for a solution of the issues, adding that these are nonpapers. Diplomatic sources say that indications are that India will consider reducing its forces along the LOC if Pakistan agrees to these proposals and starts implementing them. It will, in fact, not solve any problem.

It had been India's fashion from the very beginning to emphasize talks on secondary subjects instead of the main issues. But if the primary and basic issues are resolved, then it will automatically lead to the resolution of secondary issues as well. The whole world knows that the main dispute between Pakistan and India is the sole issue of Kashmir. But India persistently avoids any concrete and positive talks to resolve it. The first time Kashmir was acknowledged as an issue was at the recent foreign secretary-level talks between the two countries in Islamabad. However, no progress toward a solution of the issue could be made due to India's arrogance. And now, in the current proposals, India totally omitted the Kashmir issue. Since the prime minister, Ms. Benazir Bhutto, declared that only purposeful talks will be held with India, holding talks on secondary issues instead of the real ones will only be a waste of time. Hence, the rejection of the proposals is a correct decision.

Paper Urges India To Hold Plebicite in Kashmir

BK2301124594 Islamabad PAKISTAN in Urdu 21 Jan 94 p 4

[Editorial: "Condition for Future Pakistan-India Talks"]

[Text] Pakistan has proposed to India that the next round of bilateral talks should be held to fix the modalities for holding a plebiscite in occupied Kashmir. Besides, India should take definite steps in occupied Kashmir to create a conducive atmosphere for a peaceful resolution of the Kashmir dispute. Foreign Secretary Shaharyar Khan summoned Indian High Commissioner S.K. Lambha to the Foreign Office and handed to him the Pakistani proposals, which are aimed at focussing attention on the vital issues concerning the Kashmir dispute and giving the talks a meaningful and purposeful direction. Pakistan has asked India to give a response to these proposals and said that only after receiving its reply can arrangements be made for the next round of bilateral talks on the peaceful resolution of the dispute. If India stops its atrocities in occupied Kashmir and gives

its consent to providing an opportunity to the people for an impartial plebiscite on the future of Kashmir, talks could be resumed by the end of the year. According to the BBC, Foreign Secretary Shaharyar Khan did not describe these proposals as a condition for the talks. But, if India totally rejects them, it will be proved that India does not want to remove the differences. On finding out the views of the Kashmiri people, India had said there might be some consensus on certain issues. According to BBC, the political intricacies between the two countries are quite delicate. But, even this small step [of holding plebiscite in Kashmir] will also be in the right direction. The peaceful resolution of the Kashmir issue depends upon the referendum of the Kashmiri people. If India comes forward to fix modalities for this referendum and, along with it, halt the atrocities in occupied Kashmir as a mark of goodwill, it might create an atmosphere for the resumption of meaningful talks.

Sri Lanka

Opposition Group Condemns 'Fraudulent' Elections

BK2801101194 Colombo VIRAKESARI in Tamil 20 Jan 94 p 8

[Text] Batticaloa—At a press conference held in the party office in Batticaloa, E. Durairatnam, Central Committee member of the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front [EPRLF] said: In today's context, the Tamils want a political solution and not elections. After a ten-year conflict, if an election is the answer for the Tamils and if we accept it, it will weaken us.

Former provincial council members N. Nesarasa and K. Parameswaramoorthy were also present at the news conference. Durairatnam further said: This election is the first step to dividing the Northeastern Province. By holding a separate election for the Eastern Province after a referendum there, the government is now working with the aim of smashing the traditional (?fort) and motherland of the Tamils as well as dividing and destroying their region through a planned Sinhalese settlement. Several irregularities have taken place in fielding the candidates. By force, the Army has fielded candidates against their will. Is it possible to hold free and fair elections under these circumstances? One can guess the government's planned move to bolster its views in an atmosphere of strife by adopting fraudulent methods in the elections. Why do certain groups who say that they contest the elections only to defeat the United National Party not condemn the outrageous acts in fielding the candidates and keep quiet? It is doubtful whether the local bodies will be able to function independently in today's atmosphere today, where it is not possible to run the civil administration even amid military intervention. We should not forget the legitimate demands of the Tamil people by involving ourselves in the election process and should give up our struggle for power only. All the organizations should unite together and fight for a political solution. The experiences we gained by our participation in the northeastern provincial elections tell us that the Tamils are not going to reap any immediate benefits from the local body elections. At the same time, we will fight for boycotting the elections in a democratic way. We will not hesitate to strongly condemn anybody who works for or against the elections at gunpoint.

Statement Explains Election Boycott

BK2001093394 Colombo VIRAKESARI in Tamil 13 Jan 94 p 1

[By S.N.R. Pillai]

[Text] The Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front [EPRLF] has declared that it is not going to take part in the Eastern Province local elections, which are against the will of the people. At the same time, the party also has announced that it will not support any group contesting the elections. The EPRLF statement also calls for boycotting the elections, which are primarily aimed at dividing the North and East and prolonging the war.

It has also been pointed out that the attempts to hold elections in the east in an atmosphere rife with human rights violations and military intervention are meant as distraction from the ethnic conflict, making the Eastern Province a Sinhalese-dominated one, hoodwinking the world with a suggestion of the existence of a democratic system there, and encouraging the Army. Moreover, we believe that this election is the outcome of a decision made with a militaristic view to obliterate a national ethnic group rather than a political decision of a democratic country.

Minister Protests Arrest of Tamils in Colombo

BK2801081394 Colombo VIRAKESARI in Tamil 15 Jan 94 p 6

[By R. Selvaraja]

[Text] Tamil youths and women are once again being arrested indiscriminately in Colombo. M.S. Sellasamy, general secretary of the Ceylon Workers Congress and state minister, has appealed to President D.B. Wijetunge and A.S. Senaviratne, inspector general of the police in Colombo, to take immediate steps to stop these arrests.

During the harvest festival of Pongal, Tamil people go to temples, visit their relatives, and participate in festivals. State Minister Sellasamy told VIRAKESARI that he appealed to the president to issue orders halting arrests over those days, and that the president had accepted the appeal and given assurances that he would issue orders to that effect.

On Thursday [13 January] alone, 97 people were arrested in seven police station areas. The minister said that he asked Inspector General of Police Seneviratne to release all of these Tamils before the Pongal festival, and that Seneviratne informed him that he would take action to release them.

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